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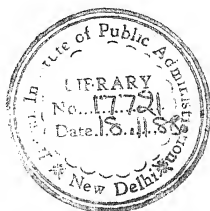
Special Number on
**Voluntary Organisations and Development
Their Role and Functions**

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EDITORIAL

AS A concept and as an instrument for social and developmental action, voluntary organisations have a variegated and chequered career. In the process of governance, expecting total success of plans and realisation of developmental objectives by any government, irrespective of its form or ideology, is almost a Utopia. This is mainly due to the fact that the phenomenon 'power corrupts' (absolute power corrupts absolutely) comes into full play as the political executive, bureaucracy, elites and even opposition quickly develop (or are widely suspected to be so) vested interest in continuation and perpetuation of a governmental system of which they are a part. As a natural corollary thereof, they allow themselves gradually to get sucked into the vortex of evils like corruption, nepotism, apathy, etc., exposing the system to the wrath of the surging

disaffected masses. The grimness of this reality has constantly spurred and goaded the political thinkers and right-thinking political leadership to devise ways and means to invoke greater and greater voluntary participation of the people themselves to get optimum results from developmental programmes. It is for this reason that voluntary organisations have always been looked upon as saviours of democratic process as they represent the true fire of democratic spirit and also the instrument for accomplishment of developmental goals. Voluntarism, thus, becomes an approach as well as a technique.

Though all religions, schools of thoughts and even social organisations, including governments, stand on the foundation of voluntarism, yet in India, the worthiness of voluntary action is more deeply engraved in our social consciousness making it a core process of our social existence. As such, voluntary action has always flowed in the arteries of our social structure in good measure though its pace and spread have varied from time to time. Winning of our freedom through mass-based, non-violent, voluntary effort in which millions joined in a country of our size and diversities, is perhaps the most unique and shining evidence thereof. It is well known that thousands of voluntary organisations working in different spheres of public life came up in spite of the hostile environment under foreign rule. On the other hand, many such organisations lost their elan when, with changed political circumstances, not only the hostility disappeared but even positive assistance was available under the new dispensation. This itself is an interesting subject for examination. However, failures have not been able to dim the importance and relevance of voluntary organisations even a little bit at any point of time. In fact, pressures of development have always brought these back into sharper focus, arousing new sets of high hopes and expectations. Their necessity is felt all the more strongly in emergency situations, like droughts, floods, etc., requiring people's involvement and cooperation on a massive scale.

In view of the importance of the theme, this issue of the journal is devoted to the role and functioning of voluntary organisations in the developmental process. The principal theme has many facets. The role and the place of voluntary organisations have been subject of debate in the developed as well developing countries. In the U.N.terminology, they are

called non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These are also identified as Volags (voluntary agencies), AGs (action groups), etc. A good deal of thought has been given as to how they can function effectively in different areas of social and economic life of a country even when there may be differing interest groups.

This issue begins with articles devoted to conceptual issues relating to the role of State in promoting and patronising voluntarism to meet developmental needs.

Prevalence of considerable influence of Gandhi's anti-state (or anarchist) views on the minds of large sections of masses in the country, good track record of performance of voluntary organisations in the field of social welfare and the feeling of despair about nearly insurmountable inherent limitations of the Leviathan of our bureaucratic system in taking implementation of developmental programmes to the expected level have together given rise to a feeling, nay apprehension, about the imminent possibilities of the voluntary organisations replacing the State itself. Obviously, information about feasibility of such an eventuality emanating from some of the developed countries of the West--where it is increasingly being believed that voluntary groups can take better care of marginalised sections of population in comparison to State--have given a great push to such an apprehension.

Bhattacharya and Bhambhri, in their articles, have, therefore, chosen to address to these basic issues relating to our political system and to critically analyse the possibility of replacement of State by voluntary organisations.

Bhattacharya examines this issue from the angles of organisational theory (Etzioni found voluntary organisations as non-authoritarian; Esman finds them very useful for development; and S.C. Dube finds its proximity to traditional social values as a feature of great significance), their long association with our society, and gaining of recognition of their merit in recent times (their merit has also been corroborated by certain recent empirical findings). Before completing the process of this assessment, Bhattacharya also gives due credence to the political dimension about voluntary organisations--particularly relating to their alleged involvement in subversive activities at the instance of external funding

agencies. Weighing the relevant factors, Bhattacharya concludes that voluntary organisations (as a marginal supplementary source) "have some role to play no doubt", but "to expect radical social change through voluntary effort is a kind of day-dreaming. The key to socio-economic reconstruction lies in the restructuring of State power in the Third World, not tame, je june voluntary action". One may not endorse the conclusion of Bhattacharya in full, but it is a fact that in the absence of the right environment and political will, it will be futile to expect voluntary agencies to discharge any ambitious role.

In view of the very nature of problems of developing countries, Bhambhri also does not visualise the possibility of "relegating the State to a role of passivity" as it would help perpetuation of serious problems like poverty and backwardness in developing countries. He, therefore, observes: "at best, the voluntary societies in India can supplement State efforts, they cannot supplant or supersede the efforts of social reconstruction launched by the State". Other reasons advanced by him are: voluntary agencies cannot change the social power structure, these are mere localised groups while State intervention affects the whole society; and if they emerge as parallel centres of power, they will cease to be voluntary organisations. He, therefore, concludes: "The voluntary agencies are a footnote in Indian development, and the development of India requires more of State intervention and not less of it". Truly, replacement of State by voluntary agencies appears to be too far-fetched in the context of developing nations, but at the same time we have to admit that involvement of voluntary agencies can certainly make the whole process of development more humane (as against the coercive force of State), understandable and pervasive through willing participation of the target-groups of development themselves. Hence, it is a target worth chasing, howsoever idealistic it may appear to be.

Muttalib discusses the various concepts, with their behavioural overtones, involved in voluntarism, including their typologies, surveying contributions of authors in the field from the West. He also traces briefly the realisation of the need in India to entrust rural development effort to voluntary organisations, particularly during the Sixth Plan and thereafter when it gained a major impetus. Analysing the guidelines laid down by Planning Commission in choosing voluntary

organisations for this purpose, Muttalib makes some interesting observations as follows: (1) "the air of suspicion that permeates the relationship between government and voluntary associations is the most discouraging aspect for the dedicated and devoted 'noble souls'. Ideological commitment of such bodies further complicates the matter. (2) Policy of involving voluntary organisations is based on the assumption of availability of spare capacity with the voluntary organisations. But the very question of desirability of expanding voluntary services at the expense of statutory provisions calls for closer examination. (3) The system of accountability for statutory social services is highly developed than it is in the voluntary Sector". As such, transfer of responsibility in this regard "might mean diminution of democratic accountability and control".

Muttalib is, however, optimistic about the future of these bodies as, according to him, "Societies with a heritage of authoritarian forms of social and political institutions, inhibit the growth of voluntary organisations. With the weakening trend of the primary social institutions--like family, caste, church, etc.--they start striking firm roots".

Inamdar traces evolution of the concept of voluntarism through different stages. Attempting a comprehensive definition of voluntary organisation, he observes: "A voluntary organisation in development to be of durable use to the community has to nurture a strong desire and impulse for community development among its members, to be economically viable, to possess dedicated and hard-working leadership and to command resources of expertise in the functions undertaken". Besides giving a critique on relationship between government and voluntary organisations in the process of development, he also discusses eight typologies of voluntary organisations. Strongly advocating the case of voluntary bodies, he observes that the State "on its own, should offer financial support even modifying the given rules...for development projects and schemes so that their enthusiasm and initiative are not hamstrung".

Kothari analyses the reasons why, despite best schemes for development, we have, in fact, displaced the poor in the name of development and have allowed trends of pro-elitist bias and dependence on the Central Government instead of building social

organisations and social base over the years. According to his diagnosis, "Believing in statism and statist view of development, we have undermined whatever was already there in terms of the voluntaristic base of Indian society as well as the new voluntaristic thrust that had come up during the national movement". He is critical of the 'voluntary agencies' that are emerging today for he wants these agencies "to be informed by a larger and holistic spirit of social voluntarism (not agencies of some external bodies)". Kothari, therefore, pleads in the name of voluntary agencies the case of "activist and non-party, non-state, groups and organisations" to extricate us from the present morass of crises.

Kothari makes suggestions regarding organising such groups for different categories of poor and tribals and points to the need to indulge in fresh thinking about the process of development. Regarding structural aspects, the present practice of Planning Commission of co-optation of voluntary organisations does not find favour with him. He also argues that a new political model needs to be created in which the voluntary sector should be incorporated as a part of our political system visualising involvement of citizen in development on a continuous basis (to check bureaucratisation), and removing the misunderstanding that a non-party political process was anti-party. Kothari, in fact, is a votary of politicisation of voluntary organisations but his objective in this regard is to generate "a political process outside the party framework and in some respects outside the State". He is stiffly opposed, for obvious reasons, to the present government policy which envisages handing over large chunks of hinterland in rural India to private sector through the new role being assigned to NGOs.

Kothari concludes with a discussion on few dilemmas confronting voluntary organisations. To him, the two basic tasks before these organisations are: (1) the space on which the State has encroached will have to be restored by them to the civil society; and (2) the new conceptualisation of voluntary effort will have to be a "comprehensive and sensitive conception of rights". One may not necessarily agree in full with the views of Kothari but the issues raised by him are undoubtedly pertinent and need fuller attention.

Bunker Roy discusses the shift that has come about in

government thinking regarding involvement of voluntary organisations in development since the Sixth Plan period. The Seventh Plan lays emphasis on professionalising voluntarism so that they acquire the required managerial capabilities. This has radically changed the whole perception about these bodies, visualising the need to bridge the gap between 'planners' and 'implementers'. There is now a greater thrust and an urgency to involve these bodies even in prestigious programmes like the 20-point programme through involving them in consultative groups. Bunker Roy then delineates the role of these bodies, as visualised by the Planning Commission, and programmes in which these bodies are to be involved. Besides, Roy also discusses briefly the new criteria for identification of these bodies for enlistment for development programmes and a code of conduct, drafted by Planning Commission, for these bodies. It is known that the issue of the code of conduct gave rise to considerable controversy. This certainly is a bold government-sponsored experiment. While the scheme appears to be attractive, it is to be seen how far it will appeal to the spirit of voluntarism and motivate these bodies to discharge significant role both as catalysts as well as an extension agency of government effort (of course, without the blemishes) to promote development programmes.

Nandedkar, treating development more as a social phenomenon in view of the social context, endorses the Gandhian model of participative association of people in development owing to the negative orientation of governmental bureaucracy. He discusses different types of voluntary bodies which can possibly be involved in developmental programmes. He chooses for detailed discussion, instrumentality of some important voluntary organisations in Gujarat in implementation of programmes for weaker sections. His focus is on SEWA in this regard.

Nandedkar cogently portrays the difference in the social ethos of developing countries (as against the West) that in these countries "Social obligation is supported more by a sense of abiding religious 'duty' than by a sense of secular individual right". He also states correctly that "overbearing paternalistic attitude of government does restrict the effective growth of voluntary associations".

Jagannadham also recognises the significance of difference in ethos between developed and developing countries in

voluntary action. He further clarifies that voluntary action in the field of social welfare is always without self-interest and profit motive which may not be so in the case of development programmes. Besides discussing some conceptual issues and historical changes, he also discusses some significant contemporary realities, such as "transformation of social environment by big industry, big business and big government have been undermining the genuineness of voluntary action in development and social welfare". He also observes that though the doubts about future of voluntary action that were created by the growth of Welfare State have been on the wane but "voluntary action has been facing a new crisis of the populist politics in an open society exposed to competing ideologies of super powers and advanced technologies". He, therefore, rightly pleads for adoption of new social welfare approach and a search for "new leadership and personnel to sustain freedom for and culture of voluntary action both for societal development and social welfare".

Paul Chowdhry has chosen to appraise critically all that has been sought to be done since Independence in the voluntary sector in the field of social welfare and development. He discusses, in the process, the setting up of Central Social Welfare Board and the problems it had to face, efforts made to promote voluntary action in the field of rural development (setting up of PADI, emergence of social activists' groups, Bharat Sevak Samaj), setting up of commissions of enquiry, setting up of government sponsored voluntary bodies as registered societies (CSWB and NIPCCD), and their relationship with government.

Paul Chowdhry points out two alarming trends: (1) erosion of old virtues in the voluntary organisations over the years; and (2) erosion of innovativeness in voluntary agencies as government is giving them structured schemes which visualise their role as mere agents of government. The situation has assumed serious proportions for what Chowdhry states: "Government has vested interest in this state of affairs in order to use them as scapegoats by giving them programmes which the government is not able to handle properly, and politicising these agencies for using them for personal ends of those in power". Something, therefore, needs to be done urgently to stem the rot and revive credibility of these bodies.

Nanavatty focuses on the role of Central Social Welfare Board during the past 35 years, highlighting its contributions. He also makes a number of suggestions to strengthen voluntary sector to promote programmes of social welfare and social development. These pertain to policy (integrated approach to grants-in-aid, setting up a statutory autonomous Board, etc); approach to social development and welfare (strengthening the infrastructure; emphasis on family and community development, and greater self-reliance); evolving a related programme of activities; training of field workers; composition of Board; study, research, monitoring and evaluation of programmes of the Board; and public education about Board's work and evolving effective public relations. These suggestions certainly deserve prompt attention of concerned authorities in the interest of strengthening the role of CSWB.

Snehlata Panda has attempted to evolve a mode of social change relevant to Orissa keeping in view its typical cultural factors which may be adopted by voluntary agencies as change-agents. Her approach is limited to certain theoretical aspects which go to constitute a model. She makes some interesting observations in her analysis. But the approach she has worked out requires more rigorous scrutiny.

Rural development is one of the most critical areas in our developmental effort. As such, the new thrust of voluntary action is specially directed towards it. Mehta has, therefore, chosen to write on the opportunities available and problems (both internal and external) that confront voluntarism in this vast field in our country. As mentioned by Mehta, past political attitude towards these bodies has "swung between positive encouragement, condescending toleration and out-right hostility". The "ambivalence between encouragement and reservation" persists even till this day. He also points to the reservations of development professionals about Gandhian approach, despite the fact that Gandhian organisations and few other dedicated groups and individual idealists have persisted in their efforts for such a long time wholly on community backing. Though there was a spurt recently in support from foreign countries, yet well-reputed voluntary bodies were rooted in the soil both in their origin as well as resource base.

According to Mehta, these bodies have to guard against

serious internal challenges, like factionalism and authoritarianism. Another problem is about talent-drain due to "lure of security and prestige associated with government service and the envy of earnings in the corporate sector". The efforts to enhance the bargaining power of voluntary organisations (by setting up a collective lobby or united front) have some in-built dangers which pose threat to independence of their entity. Mehta, therefore, rightly cautions: "Voluntarism must be grounded in a firm faith in plurality and adherence to a voluntarily determined code of conduct. What needs to be reiterated is that even without such a countervailing power, the opportunity of inching progress in grassroots confidence-building is not necessarily doomed."

Mehta also discusses institutional problems relating to grafting relevant technology, managerial talent and professional skills in voluntary organisations as also the most difficult question about their attitude to conventional politics in the field of rural development. These doubtlessly require patience and long-term unflinching commitment. Mehta then briefly discusses the role of his body, Seva Mandir, which is rendering service in the field for so many years in Rajasthan.

Chaturvedi examines the role of voluntary organisations in rural development with a historical perspective from Gandhian era to the present day and concludes: "A long tradition of community based voluntary work, which had been built over past two centuries got lost in the period following Independence. Thanks to the policies of the government which co-opted voluntary organisations and eroded their base in the community".

Chaturvedi argues that the organisations that depended on government, lost their vitality, but wonders "why Gandhians could not resist this temptation and became party to the distortion and distraction of voluntary movement which Gandhi had so zealously built". He, therefore, rightly demands emergence and spread of movements like 'Chipko' (of Himalayan region) and 'Apiko' (of Karnataka), which alone have strong base at grassroots level now, for growth of genuine voluntary action in the country.

Reddy also discusses voluntary organisations' role in rural development, identifying different eminent bodies working in

the field according to their area of specialisation. He also discusses briefly merits and limitations of these bodies in discharging their functions, besides giving a list of programmes under rural development (as identified in the Seventh Plan document) in which their support could be enlisted. Reddy pleads for enhancing financial support, relaxing of rules and regulations for greater involvement of these bodies in the process of rural transformation. Some of these issues of functional nature merit consideration.

Maheshwari finds voluntary organisation's involvement in rural development as "sporadic and intermittent" and emphasises the need for proper planning. Another major problem to which he points is about lack of assured funding and uncertainties involved in the release of grants even after sanction. He gives an account of increase in the flow of foreign funds for voluntary action over the years.

About the future of voluntary organisations, Maheshwari has the following observations: (1) Shift in the focus of voluntary action from individuals to communities; (2) voluntary organisations are coming together as federations which will strengthen their position before government; (3) need to organise rural poor themselves to get optimum results as voluntary work for them is carried out now only by outsiders having diverse political commitments; and (4) increasing professionalisation in voluntary effort due to pouring in of personnel specialising in veterinary science, agronomy, horticulture, etc. Maheshwari also advises voluntary organisations to learn evaluating "their goals, strategies and logistics from time to time and be prepared to change them when feedback so suggests".

Like rural development, environment is another crucial area where support of voluntary effort is desperately needed to protect our environment which is so vitally linked with the existence and survival of mankind. Sethi, therefore, focuses on these problems.

Identifying areas in the field of ecology and environment protection where support of voluntary effort could be avoided only at our peril, Sethi also points to the deficiencies with which the voluntary groups are afflicted, rendering their job very difficult. However, these serious difficulties do not deter Sethi for he seems to be a firm believer in the strategy

of learning from experience. Luckily, experiences of 'Chipko', Jharkhand Movement in Santhal Parganas, and Pani Panchayat in Gujarat come handy as trail blazers.

Appasamy and Thiagarajan give an account of voluntary participation of people in cleaning waterways of Madras city. This case of the organisation, called INTACH, points to a host of such other areas having tremendous potential and scope for voluntary action to improve our living conditions without waiting indefinitely for governmental intervention. Such small beginnings can really transform our social existence altogether.

Prasad writes on role of voluntary organisations in promoting welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country. He surveys the efforts made in this regard in the pre-Independence era as well as the post-Independence period with detailed statistical support. He follows it up with a discussion on eight eminent voluntary organisations which have made significant contributions in the field.

Prasad visualises a useful role for voluntary organisations in planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes for these weaker sections of our society and also gives a list of new areas in the field where voluntary organisations can discharge a meaningful role.

In view of several charges levelled against these bodies, Prasad endorses the need for an evaluation of the role of these agencies. In fact, such an evaluation should be periodically made regularly so that we may be able to get necessary feedback required for altering or modifying our strategy and course of action relating to these very sensitive sections of our society.

Illiteracy is one of the most significant factors responsible for our backwardness and poverty. Here also lot of scope exists for help from the voluntary sector. Ramabrahmam's article presents involvement of voluntary organisations in spreading of adult education in Andhra Pradesh. He discusses role of four voluntary agencies, two of which are women's organisations, in this regard giving necessary details to quantify their efforts. The author, however, feels that despite these efforts, no appreciable dent has been made on the

problem of illiteracy. He, therefore, pleads for rigorous implementation of NAEP, strengthening of monitoring and evaluation network and procedures, adoption of diversified methods for qualitative improvement, etc. Obviously, some of Ramabrahmam's findings would be found useful by the policy-makers of NAEP.

Menon writes on role of voluntary agencies in the field of legal aid, identifying areas, where useful contribution can be made, as follows: liaison between legal aid agencies and people in need; educating people about their legal rights and duties; prevention of disputes through conciliation, mediation and arbitration; taking up public interest litigation; and monitoring implementation of welfare laws. Besides discussing briefly the just enacted Legal Services Authority Act, 1987, incorporating involvement of voluntary agencies in this field, Menon also evaluates the role of Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS), set up to look after legal aid schemes, during 1980-86. The CILAS has an impressive record of grants-giving; bringing together voluntary agencies, State Legal Boards and social workers; organising legal aid camps and Lok Adalats; and promotion of legal literacy. As a result, we have now over 50 universities and law colleges involved in programmes related to legal aid. He, however, rightly concludes: "It will not be an exaggeration to state that legal aid acquired credibility and popular support...largely because of involvement of voluntary agencies...". However, "the future of legal aid,... will also depend on the extent and degree that the Act, now adopted, can inspire among voluntary agencies and social welfare organisations".

Singh, in view of the compulsions enshrined in our Constitution with regard to legal aid (he cites relevant judgements in support thereof), identifies three broad categories with regard to scope of composition of voluntary organisations for purposes of providing legal aid to the poor. These are: bodies of lawyers only, lawyer's wing of social welfare bodies, and social service organisations.

Singh observes that right to legal aid has become a constitutional right due to "judicial creativity" which "needs to be accorded statutory recognition at the earliest". In fact, this has already been done by passage of a Bill on the subject in Parliament, in just three days' time in its last Monsoon

session leaving the field wide open for voluntary organisations to step in and discharge their due role.

Yet another area where voluntary organisations have to discharge their role in full measure is crime prevention and treatment of offenders. Guha Roy discusses the contribution of Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home (in Calcutta) in the field of prevention of juvenile delinquency and what can be done with regard to institutional and non-institutional treatment of women and other adult offenders. After-care of released prisoners is another area where, the author states, voluntary organisations can play a major role. The author discusses the reasons why voluntary organisations have failed to discharge their role in this important area and comes to the conclusion: "In the ultimate analysis, however, the enduring solution to the growing problems of crime control would hinge on the political will to bring about rapid socio-economic development for the welfare of deprived, depressed and downtrodden people of the country."

Access to formal banking system is a very significant factor in the process of economic development, more so for people afflicted with disadvantages pertaining to terrain, seasonality, and sectoral dimension of social and economic stratification. Gupta, in his article, presents some lessons deduced from six cases of Bank-NGO-Poor interface. These six case studies amply prove that the NGOs can really make very useful contribution by building bridges between the banker and the disadvantaged groups in the process of their development through easy funding of their productive ventures and allied activity. This certainly is a promising area but the author seems to be right, at least for the present, in concluding "while we do not believe that the challenge of developing poor in backward regions can be left primarily on the shoulders of NGOs, we do recognise the need for learning from innovative approaches".

The articles portion concludes with a set of five articles covering experiences of our neighbouring countries with regard to voluntary effort in the process of development. The comparative perspective presented by these authors adds immense value to our effort in bringing out this special number.

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Samarasinghe discusses the scenario of Sri Lanka in this regard. He discusses their typology, funding pattern, legal status and gives an overview of broad groups functioning there in the voluntary sector. Besides discussing constraints of NGOs there, he also discusses coordination among NGOs and government-NGO relationship.

The aforesaid contributions raise a number of issues and problems which indicate the wide-ranging scope of the subject. Neither it has been our intention nor is it possible to be exhaustive in the treatment of the subject. The primary emphasis has been on the role of voluntary bodies in relation to development. But the concept of development is by itself not only an extensive but even unexplored area from many angles. Development even as an accepted concept is developing new fractions with emerging economic imperatives. In spite of all attempts at academic objectivity, ideological predilections and motivations cannot be avoided. Voluntary action is looked upon by many as an instrument of mass mobilisation or involvement of large number of people and, thus, help to reduce the chasm between the 'governed' and the 'governors'. Voluntary institutions represent systems of delivery and, therefore, of equity and social justice. Voluntary action in partnership with the

of learning from experience. Luckily, experiences of 'Chipko', Jharkhand Movement in Santhal Parganas, and Pani Panchayat in Gujarat come handy as trail blazers.

Appasamy and Thiagarajan give an account of voluntary participation of people in cleaning waterways of Madras city. This case of the organisation, called INTACH, points to a host of such other areas having tremendous potential and scope for voluntary action to improve our living conditions without waiting indefinitely for governmental intervention. Such small beginnings can really transform our social existence altogether.

Prasad writes on role of voluntary organisations in promoting welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country. He surveys the efforts made in this regard in the pre-Independence era as well as the post-Independence period with detailed statistical support. He follows it up with a discussion on eight eminent voluntary organisations which have made significant contributions in the field.

Prasad visualises a useful role for voluntary organisations in planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes for these weaker sections of our society and also gives a list of new areas in the field where voluntary organisations can discharge a meaningful role.

In view of several charges levelled against these bodies, Prasad endorses the need for an evaluation of the role of these agencies. In fact, such an evaluation should be periodically made regularly so that we may be able to get necessary feedback required for altering or modifying our strategy and course of action relating to these very sensitive sections of our society.

Illiteracy is one of the most significant factors responsible for our backwardness and poverty. Here also lot of scope exists for help from the voluntary sector. Ramabrahmam's article presents involvement of voluntary organisations in spreading of adult education in Andhra Pradesh. He discusses role of four voluntary agencies, two of which are women's organisations, in this regard giving necessary details to quantify their efforts. The author, however, feels that despite these efforts, no appreciable dent has been made on the

problem of illiteracy. He, therefore, pleads for rigorous implementation of NAEP, strengthening of monitoring and evaluation network and procedures, adoption of diversified methods for qualitative improvement, etc. Obviously, some of Ramabrahmam's findings would be found useful by the policy-makers of NAEP.

Menon writes on role of voluntary agencies in the field of legal aid, identifying areas, where useful contribution can be made, as follows: liaison between legal aid agencies and people in need; educating people about their legal rights and duties; prevention of disputes through conciliation, mediation and arbitration; taking up public interest litigation; and monitoring implementation of welfare laws. Besides discussing briefly the just enacted Legal Services Authority Act, 1987, incorporating involvement of voluntary agencies in this field, Menon also evaluates the role of Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS), set up to look after legal aid schemes, during 1980-86. The CILAS has an impressive record of grants-giving; bringing together voluntary agencies, State Legal Boards and social workers; organising legal aid camps and Lok Adalats; and promotion of legal literacy. As a result, we have now over 50 universities and law colleges involved in programmes related to legal aid. He, however, rightly concludes: "It will not be an exaggeration to state that legal aid acquired credibility and popular support...largely because of involvement of voluntary agencies...". However, "the future of legal aid,... will also depend on the extent and degree that the Act, now adopted, can inspire among voluntary agencies and social welfare organisations".

Singh, in view of the compulsions enshrined in our Constitution with regard to legal aid (he cites relevant judgements in support thereof), identifies three broad categories with regard to scope of composition of voluntary organisations for purposes of providing legal aid to the poor. These are: bodies of lawyers only, lawyer's wing of social welfare bodies, and social service organisations.

Singh observes that right to legal aid has become a constitutional right due to "judicial creativity" which "needs to be accorded statutory recognition at the earliest". In fact, this has already been done by passage of a Bill on the subject in Parliament, in just three days' time in its last Monsoon

session leaving the field wide open for voluntary organisations to step in and discharge their due role.

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government or in the Syndicalist stance as opposed to it, is an important issue. The culture-specific role as opposed to the generalised approach is another valid point for debate.

In many developing societies, even the State has been dubbed as soft by commentators and hence not an effective instrument of socio-economic development. Will not the honeycomb of voluntary agencies only aggravate the ineffectiveness of the State? Similarly, it may be only wishful thinking for many idealists to visualise the 'withering of the State' as coercive State, not in the Marxist sense. Voluntary action is necessarily concerned with delegation, devolution and decentralisation of authority and power. One can visualise tensions of horizontal and vertical power relationship. As many international agencies and organisations or even foreign donors make fervent pleas for setting up of voluntary agencies in many countries, which are yet to achieve adequate national consolidation, fears are expressed rightly or wrongly that the plea for voluntary action in the name of speedy and effective development is only a clever move to weaken the power of the State in the emerging nations as a part of the large game of global power politics.

Apart from this, larger issues of operational, organisational and managerial nature also arise. The need for coordination and harmonisation even among the voluntary agencies assumes importance if duplication and wastefulness of limited resources are to be minimised. What should be the nature and extent of such harmonisation? It is also important that voluntary agencies, while serving a group or a section, do not develop exclusive and parochial tendencies. In the wider social context, this may prove dangerous. Again, there is the question of the motivation of those who initiate voluntary action. Selflessness and idealised selfishness cannot always be distinguished. Is a particular voluntary agency, once set up, there to stay all the time and acquire a vested interest? Who is to look into these problems? While the growing concern is for openness in government, can voluntary agencies screen themselves from public eye? The informed and capable leadership for voluntary agencies is important. How does it evolve? How does the flow of leadership continue? Enthusiasm may not be enough. Voluntary help in

the sense of being not paid may not suffice. In the expanding area of voluntary action, trained manpower is relevant. Voluntary action areas, especially in the field of development, are becoming technical and specialised in nature. Hence the need for well conceived training programmes. With all informality and variation, it will still raise the question of personnel management within the voluntary agencies. Per se efficiency cannot be secured. Voluntary agencies have to systematically work for it. Voluntary agencies have an edge as they are supposed to combine empathetic concern with administrative capability and organisational flexibility.

The rule of law and the framework of discipline, eschewing all extremes of rigidity, cannot be over emphasised in our complex society. The sources from which and how the resources are raised pose a very crucial issue for the working of any voluntary agency. The regulatory and promotional role of the government is an issue of endless debate. Even simple matters like maintenance of accounts and auditing are aspects of public accountability and, in the sphere of voluntary agencies, it is not the formal but the informal sense of social responsibility that is of paramount importance. The ethics of voluntary agencies and the value system of all those associated with their working have also a value of their own in the total set-up. In this special number, we have attempted to raise some issues in an area of social action which is fast developing into a discipline of scientific enquiry. We will feel amply gratified if our effort makes even a modest contribution to this growing and on going dialogue.

In our modest bid to put together useful material on the theme--doubtlessly of great significance, both contemporary as well as enduring--of this special number, we are aware of the blemishes like omission of some important aspects and repetition of certain others which perhaps was unavoidable in view of the constraints that go with an attempt of this nature.

We are extremely grateful to the galaxy of authors of articles and compilers of two bibliographies who have so very generously responded to our call at such a short notice by sending in their valued scripts purely as a labour of love. It

is simply with such overwhelming gestures that we draw our sustenance to rededicate ourselves to serve our readers better.

Besides articles, this issue carries a section on documents containing useful information on the theme and another containing two bibliographies.

--EDITOR

Voluntary Associations, Development and the State

MOHIT BHATTACHARYA

EXPERTS ON 'development' have been suggesting various recipes for circumventing 'underdevelopment' in the Third World countries. The current fad is voluntary action. In this article, theory and practice of voluntarism have been examined and the tendency to bypass the State has been sought to be exposed.

ORGANISATION THEORY

The strength of voluntary organisations in society has been the subject of research in social psychology and organisation theory. Etzioni, using compliance as the major source of differentiation between organisations, offers a typology of organisations that places voluntary organisations in the category of a special type of 'normative' organisation. As he points out, when coercion is the basis of authority, compliance is alienative, when remuneration is the basis of authority, compliance takes a calculative turn; when authority base is normative, compliance is moral. To quote Etzioni:

The diversity of voluntary associations is enormous. There is hardly a goal, from watching birds...to spacing birds...which has not been pursued by some association... all voluntary associations have a similar nature: they are primarily social, using in addition varying degrees of pure normative power.¹

In organisation theory, voluntary organisations have thus, been characterised as non-authoritarian, commitment-producing entities that rely basically on the normal and idealistic values shared by the organisation members.

The Third World countries engaged in large-scale socio-economic reconstruction are faced with choice of instrumentalities for organisation and action. One important strand in development administration has been to move away from bureaucratic organisation and search

for decentralised and debureaucratized social efforts. Milton Esman has identified four instruments of action which, in his view, facilitate nation-building and socio-economic development. These are: (a) political organisation, (b) administrative (bureaucratic) system, (c) associational interest groups, and (d) mass media.

Esman attaches special importance to the role of voluntary agencies in development, as he observes:

... deliberate social change may be greatly facilitated by community organisation. In the performance of many service and control functions, governments cannot deal effectively with unorganized individual. It is thus important that the community be organized in order to relate effectively to the administrative institutions performing services associated with nation-building and development programmes.²

Three advantages, in Esman's view,³ flow from involvement of voluntary agencies in the implementation of development programmes: (1) a sense of solidarity, (2) opportunity to interact with agencies of development/government, and (3) participation in decision-making.

Social Reformers

Voluntary social action has been advocated by many social reformers. In political theory, anarchism has gone to the extent of replacement of the state by social voluntarism. Two streams of thought in India deserve special mention in this connection: one characterised by anti-statism, and another oriented toward traditional social collectivism. Gandhi is the best exponent of the first stream of thought, as he wrote:

What I would personally prefer, would be, not a centralization of power in the hands of the state but an extension of the sense of trusteeship; as in my opinion, the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the state. However, if it is unavoidable, I would support a minimum of state-ownership. What I disapprove of is an organisation based on force which a state is. Voluntary organisation there must be.⁴

The anarchist trend in Gandhi logically led to the underrating of the role of the state and reliance on collective social action. This trend of thought and action has been evident in others also like Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan (JP).

The second stream of thought seeks to draw on the strength of traditional social values in the belief that in India there has been a

long history of community action and self-help. S.C. Dube, one of our eminent sociologists, has written in this vein:

Not everything in tradition is evil. Compassion, concern for collective good, and selfless action are not values that were useful only in the past. It appears that they will be meaningful values for the future also. As such there should be no unnecessary haste to reject them to adopt a path of gross materialism that emphasizes personal consumption at the cost of social justice. Nor should we underplay structural features that highlight social harmony, community-ness, mutual help and cooperation, and the quality of interpersonal relations. It is essential to rethink, therefore, many of the key traditional values and institutional patterns and to assign them the place which they richly deserve in the scheme of the alternative future that we visualize.⁵

Dube's comment, at first sight, might sound conservative. But underlying his observation, there is a search for source of community action in traditional India, and this sentiment has been voiced by other social thinkers as well, such as Rabindra Nath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda.

Official Committees

The need for involvement of voluntary organisations has been acknowledged by a number of official committees dealing with 'development'. For instance, the famous Balvantray Mehta Committee (1957), that had given birth to the idea of panchayati raj as a new system of rural local government, had this to say about voluntary agencies:

Today in the implementation of the various schemes of community development, more and more emphasis is laid on non-governmental agencies and workers and on the principle that ultimately people's own local organisations should take over the entire work.

The Mehta Committee felt that non-official agencies engaged in development work would no doubt like to keep their identities intact; but at the same time these agencies would in future be "drawn into closer cooperation and even collaboration with statutory organisations".⁶

Another important committee, dealing with rural-urban relationship (1966), laid emphasis on the role of voluntary organisations in mobilising community support for local development activities. To

quote the Committee Report:

Local voluntary organisations can be very helpful in mobilising popular support and assistance of the people in the activities of local body. It is possible to maintain constant and close contact with the people through these organisations. The formation of a network of local organisations, like neighbourhood and Mohalla Committees and citizens forums, would be useful in mobilising public participation.⁷

Another all-India Committee--the Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions (commonly known as Asoka Mehta Committee)--wrote in appreciation of the role of voluntary organisations in rural development. To quote the Committee Report:

Of the several voluntary organisations engaged in rural welfare, a few have helped the Panchayati Raj Institutions in micro-planning exercises. They prepare comprehensive area development plans, conduct feasibility studies and cost/benefit analysis, explore ways and means to induce local participation in planning and implementation. AVARD (Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development) also provides consultancy services in project formulation and assists its member agencies with technical support. Voluntary agencies, if they have requisite expertise, proven standing and well-equipped organisations, can assist Panchayati Raj Institutions in the planning process. They can be particularly involved in formulation of projects and schemes. They can also help to create strong public opinion in support of measures aimed at social change.⁸

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Historically speaking, voluntary organisations have proliferated and have actively taken part in various fields of social action during the British rule. One major anthology of public associations points out the steady growth of associations in the presidency towns first and later in other parts of the country. As it has been said, "The second half of the nineteenth century has...fittingly been described as the Age of 'politics of associations'." Initially, political objectives dominated most of the associations. But with the passage of time, their interests had become much more diversified. To quote the anthology:

It would be a mistake to suppose that the aspirations merely

related to politics, or that the Associations formed primarily for political purposes held the monopoly. This is belied by the existence of a number of organisations formed exclusively for promotion of social, educational, literary and cultural advancement. Even if we leave societies and associations founded with technical and professional objectives, like the Agricultural and Horticultural Society, Calcutta Phrenological Society, Society for the Promotion of Industrial Arts, as well as the societies managed by the Christian Missionaries and European philanthropists, the number of associations which owed their origin, and working to the initiative of 'Native gentlemen' for promoting normal, social, literary and cultural interests was by no means inconsiderable.⁹

Voluntary organisations engaged in social welfare activities, like helping the helpless, doing relief work, spreading literacy and so on, have a creditable record of achievement in India since the days of British rule. It is not possible to precisely state the number of voluntary agencies at present engaged in social development activities in India. Then there is the difficulty of defining the voluntary organisations. Caste and communal organisations, educational and philanthropic associations, missionary and religious organisations--all these known forms are present in all parts of India and their activities cover a wide range. According to some social scientists, the presence of so many voluntary associations is indicative of the high value that is attached to 'filial and fraternal solidarity' in India.

Current Trend

Tracing the evolution of voluntary organisations in India, Marcus Franda has observed that there has been a directional change over the years in the character of these organisations. As Franda puts it:

The general directions of this change--whether for groups inspired by a religion, by Gandhi, by a political ideology, or by patronage politics--has run counter to older ideas of welfare, charity, and social reform to emphasize professionalism, in the service of self-reliant community development.¹⁰

The challenges in the field in terms of medical relief, agricultural development, socio-economic planning and technological advancement have impelled the voluntary organisations to shed their amateurish character and to develop more and more technical

expertise. To quote Franda again:

As technology and agriculture and life itself have all become more complex, voluntary organisations have felt pressures to become involved in community-wise projects and have found they need a variety of expertise in order to do so. In this new context, the fact that a person volunteers to join an organisation does not have much meaning unless that person either has a needed skill or can be trained to acquire one.¹¹

Most voluntary organisations are now recipients of government fund, as there has been a tendency in recent times to get things done through such organisations. As public policy tends to lean more and more on voluntary agencies, this, in turn, has motivated them to upgrade their technical skills and even to have regular salaried staff. An illustrative statement is quoted from the Fourth Five-Year Plan:

Since voluntary organisations play an important role in extending welfare activities among the backward classes, assistance will be given to them for taking up projects like publicity and propaganda for removal of untouchability, running hostels and educational institutions, organising welfare and community centres, social education and conducting training and orientation courses.¹²

The Seventh Five-Year Plan has relied heavily on the voluntary organisations to implement anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes. The CAARD Report is the latest document emphasising the need for the involvement of voluntary agencies in rural development activities. It has been the contention of the Report that the tasks involved in the implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes are so vast that government alone cannot perform everything. Supplementary effort from the voluntary agencies will be necessary, as "expertise of a different kind is required, strategies of a different nature need to be designed, personnel with different attitudes and orientation will need to be mobilised to reach the target groups."¹³

It has been the argument among a section of development theorists that the government bureaucracy being rule-bound and essentially conservative, it may not be advisable to entrust 'development' work to the bureaucracy. Especially in certain spheres of activity demanding creativity, innovativeness and high motivation and commitment, non-bureaucratic organisations may be more suitable. From this standpoint, voluntary organisations, if equipped with necessary technical expertise, can be useful agencies of socio-economic development. Raj

Krishna, an eminent economist and a former member of the Planning Commission, has echoed the same sentiment:

...more and more work should be entrusted to non-official agencies. Many of these agencies have good leaders and professionals working in the field. Government departments should help them, legally, administratively, technically and financially, to make and implement area plans. The voluntary agencies can perhaps take up the responsibility of making and implementing area plans in at least 300 blocks. The agencies which already have high-grade planning and action capabilities will have to help and train other agencies and their workers.¹⁴

Two important assumptions here are:

1. Availability of development planning expertise in the voluntary organisations, and
2. Government support to them in all respects. Since these agencies are not bogged down in routine activities and are not tied to strict rules and regulations, as is the case with bureaucracy, it is expected that they will perform better than the government departments. Inter-personal relationship is also likely to be better in voluntary organisations, as work would be a collective effort to bring about social change. 'Self' is likely to be of secondary importance and a high sense of moral commitment would bind the work group together. Under these circumstances, voluntary associations would no doubt prove to be an invaluable social asset.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Studies on actual working of some of the voluntary organisations in the field of development have revealed their modes of working and their impact on development. Marcus Franda, for example, has gathered information on a variety of organisations engaged in the field of rural development. One such organisations is Bunker Roy's Social Work and Research Centre (SWRC) at Tilonia (Rajasthan) that has been offering professional advice and guidance to the farmers in health and hygiene, agricultural production, engineering, marketing, etc.¹⁵ With a group of young professionals led by Roy and his wife, SWRC has been experimenting with their unique integrated approach to rural development. Professionalism and dynamic leadership coupled with national and international financing have helped SWRC establish some credibility no doubt. But, as a long-term proposition, its

continuity remains somewhat uncertain.

The other interesting account in Franda's book relates to JP's Musahri Project in north Bihar. Started to stem the tide of 'Naxalite' movement, JP's desire was "to demonstrate with positive action how the challenge of violence could be used to speed up the process of non-violent social change". JP could not stay at the project site for long and it was later pursued as a field project of AVARD (Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development). AVARD has basically focused on tubewell irrigation to support agriculture in the block, and the Government's Rural Industries Project has been trying to create employment opportunities. As Franda has pointed out, "In north Bihar a nascent modernity is simply being placed on top of an old and semi-feudal existence by outside elites".¹⁶

The examples just cited are voluntary efforts, no doubt, but these are not grassroots efforts and do not represent local people's innate impulse to organise for development. Intervention by outside experts and funds from the government and international agencies have sustained the development efforts. Their long-term future is uncertain and these are small 'enclaves' in a vast semi-feudal rural society.

Politics of Voluntarism

Voluntary agencies have often been looked at as non-partisan. Their philosophy has always been extolled as 'people' or 'poor' oriented. In general, an idea has gained ground that these agencies serve the poor and the down-trodden with rare dedication and commitment. The dirty world of 'politics' never touches them, as they are beyond 'politics'. This view is, however, not corroborated by facts. Wirsing's study of Nagpur shows clearly the close nexus between local politics and voluntary organisations.¹⁷ The very fact that the Sarvodayists, led by JP, had come to Musahri block to rid the area of Naxalite influence is an adequate proof of the politics of voluntarism in AVARD's action programme.

An extreme view is taken by Prakash Karat in his article on "Action Groups/Voluntary Organisations: A Factor in Imperialist Strategy".¹⁸ According to Karat, there are about 5,000 voluntary organisations in India working in rural and urban areas, among the landless, tribals, women, slum-dwellers and unorganised labour. They are regular recipients of funds from different agencies in the Western 'imperialist' countries. As Karat writes:

There is a sophisticated and comprehensive strategy worked out in imperialist quarters to harness the forces of voluntary agencies/action groups to their strategic design to penetrate the Indian

society and influence its course of development. It is the imperialist ruling circles which have provided through their academic outfits the political and ideological basis for the outlook of a substantial number of these proliferating groups in India. By providing liberal funds to these groups, imperialists have created avenues to penetrate directly vital sections of the Indian society and simultaneously use this movement as a vehicle to counter and disrupt the potential of the left movement.¹⁹

Karat's observation may look like an overreaction to the working of a group of voluntary agencies. At the same time, it is true that, from time to time, the Government of India and some of the state governments have come down heavily on some voluntary organisations on the plea that they were engaged in subversive and anti-state activities.

AN ASSESSMENT

It seems our assessment of the working of voluntary organisations lands us in a contradictory situation. On the one hand, voluntary social efforts in the field of 'development' are a salutary addition to the stock of organised efforts to bring about socio-economic changes. On the other hand, there are voluntary agencies that seem to be subversive in character and work consciously to counteract the influence of left movement among the vulnerable sections of the community.

Social voluntarism, as a form of organisational effort, has often been suggested to supplement government effort and to introduce a debureaucratising influence into areas of social action where 'bureaucracy' may not be suitable. There are other assumptions too. Governmental resources are thought to be too meagre to meet the challenges of development. So, let the society also contribute voluntarily and informally through the voluntary agencies. Another assumption has been that people themselves are the best judges of their own local situations. With minimal government support, the 'people' would voluntarily come forward to improve their socio-economic conditions.

In these assumptions, the society is considered to be sufficiently homogeneous and conflict-free. Structural inequality in our society is not acknowledged, nor is it admitted that the fruits of development have been consistently cornered by a small section of the community. Development is not a value-free concept. It raises the vital question of 'development for whom? If the whole State structure is oriented toward benefiting a small, privileged section, can

the patchy, isolated and limited efforts of voluntary organisations, even if these are well-meaning, bring about radical socio-economic changes? Most voluntary organisations rely on government funds for their activities, and funds are passed on to only selective organisations who have obviously to accept the basic terms of reference set by the donor government. One would suspect that, under such circumstances, governmental fund flow to voluntary organisations would be intended to maintain *status quo*.

Raj Krishna, one-time votary of voluntary action, comments in the same vein:

...the fundamental fact is that the rural development bureaucracy usually does not like the development of autonomous institutions. Therefore, it obstructs the work of most of the voluntary agencies, or brings them under its own tight control by exercising its regulatory legal power and by manipulating the strings attached to government finance. Only those few voluntary agencies, which have access to non-official sources of finance, and have built up an independent base of popular support through their good work in the past, can manage to remain autonomous. They have tapped the resources of business houses (such as Mafatlals), or the Gandhian funds or some foreign voluntary organisations, or the Christian Churches.

The majority of voluntary agencies, depending mainly on government finance, are simply extensions of the government bureaucracy just like a majority of cooperatives.

If they have not been captured by the bureaucracy, they have been captured by the rural oligarchy, the local politicians and/or criminals just like cooperatives. The resources funneled to them by the government are misappropriated by these local 'dadas'.

The very fact that the government 'selects' the voluntary agencies to be supported leads to bureaucratic control or partisan 'dada' control.

In view of these hard facts of life, the theoretically conceived advantages of the growth of a voluntary sector do not materialise except in a few isolated pockets.

By contrast, there are organisations of peasants and workers that have taken an aggressive, confrontational posture seeking to bring about radical changes in social relations of production. The organisation of the landless in Bihar and the Naxalites in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh are instances of radical voluntary organisations challenging the state structure itself. Many a time their efforts have been characterised as law-and-order problem demanding repressive

police action.

Conventionally, voluntary organisations have been valued so long as they function within the existing 'order' and follow the directives of government. Any organisation that questions the existing order and challenges its pre-suppositions incurs the wrath of the State. Any assessment of the working of voluntary organisations in this country needs a measuring rod against which these organisations should be evaluated.

There has been a tendency in recent times to underrate the role of the State and to overrely on voluntary organisations as appropriate agencies of development. Political scientists, like Rajni Kothari, seem to be suggesting that spontaneous non-party people's movements at the grassroots level hold the key to meaningful social development. The Third World, it needs emphasising, is the post-colonial world. It carries over the legacy of an unjust, and exploitative social order. The massive social disorganisation left behind by imperialism and since perpetuated by a feudal-capitalist socio-economic system can hardly be corrected by isolated and minuscule efforts of voluntary organisations. As a marginal supplementary source, they have some role to play no doubt. But to expect radical social change through voluntary effort is a kind of day-dreaming. The key to socio-economic reconstruction lies in the restructuring of State power in the Third World, not tame, je june voluntary action.

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The Modern State and Voluntary Societies

C.P. BHAMBHRI

DEVELOPMENT OF capitalism in the Western countries led to emergence of modern State systems and these State systems were transplanted by the Western capitalist countries in their erstwhile colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The evolution of the modern State systems in the Western countries is intimately linked with evolution of the capitalist societies and the role of the State has been changing in response to the changing social requirements of capitalist development. The modern capitalist states began their journey with limited social roles and responsibilities and they have established themselves as a central factor in the regulation and management of their societies. Thus, all modern states in the Western developed countries have emerged as a crucial and critical factor in the management of their societies.

Many theoreticians of the modern State in the West legitimise the expanding role of the State because the State, according to them, promotes general welfare and all other social organisations and institutions promote particular and sectional interests. The State is looked upon as the guardian of the general welfare of society, and this belief has facilitated the emergence of all powerful State in the West. R.M. MacIver observes:

In other words, the State properly intervenes, not to conduct the economic business of the country, but to uphold social standards, to prevent exploitation and manifest injustice, to remove the needless hazards of the economic struggle, to assure and advance the general interest against the carelessness or selfishness of particular group, to control monopolies so that the public may be protected against their exactions, to see that the future well-being of the country is not jeopardized by the pursuit of immediate gains. The range of state-action is not to be defined by any eternal criterion. It must vary with the conditions, with the need for it and with its own capacity'.¹

This classic formulation of MacIver has been challenged by the Marxists and voluntary groups in the Western democratic countries.

The Marxists do not accept that the state represents general welfare of all social groups. On the contrary, the Marxists allege that the State is an important instrument in the hands of private property owners, and its essential role is to defend and promote the interests of the economically dominating social classes in a society. According to Lenin, "the distinguishing feature of the State is the existence of a separate class of people in whose hands power is concentrated."²

In spite of these fundamental differences between MacIver and Lenin, an agreement exists that the State is a central factor in modern societies and its role is comprehensive.³

During the last few decades, some significant social movements have developed in the Western democratic societies which proclaim themselves as anti-state and they believe in role of voluntary groups to tackle specific neglected problems of marginalised groups in society. The genesis of emergence of these voluntary groups lies in their perception that the State is incapable of tackling the problems of neglected and vulnerable groups of society and this role can be performed by voluntary action groups. The voluntary action groups in the Western societies are projecting themselves as an alternative to over-centralised State systems in the West. It is argued by the voluntary action groups that the power of the State has failed to resolve the crisis of modern times, and voluntary action is needed to find solutions of the growing social crises of the Western societies, and such voluntary intervention can succeed by clipping the wings of the monster of modern centralised and militarised Western State systems. Frank and Fuentes observe:

Hardly anywhere, then, during this crisis, is 'State power' an adequate desideratum or instrument for the satisfaction of popular needs. Therefore, people everywhere--albeit different people in different ways--seek advancement, or at least protection and affirmation, or at least freedom, through a myriad of non-state social movements, which thereby seek to reorganise social and redefine political life.⁴

The voluntary groups in the West are rejectionists of the modern State system, and they believe in group intervention to resolve the crisis generated by centralised and militarised State systems. The modern State is oppressive, bureaucratised and dehumanised, the voluntary action will make societies humane and harmonious.

What is the reality of developing countries? How far are the

developments of the Western developed countries relevant for a developing country like India? Is the State a monster in a developing country?

Developed and developing countries are fundamentally different because the historical burden of backwardness has to be effectively tackled by all the developing countries including India. The struggle against backwardness in India cannot be fought without an active role of the State. Voluntary agencies cannot eradicate poverty of India because social and economic structures have to be transformed to destroy the basics of backwardness. India inherited a stagnant economy, a primitive agriculture, a low level of industry and technology, and a majority of poverty-stricken population. The basic challenge before India is to break the vicious linkages of backward society to redeem the pledges of freedom fighters of the country and this role can be performed only by the State.

During the last 40 years, India has been able to break the essentials of a stagnant economy, and this has been possible only because of the planning process adopted by the Indian State. It cannot be suggested that India has been able to eradicate poverty and social exploitation and it is also not maintained that many serious distortions are not observable in the developmental process of India. A huge democratic pressure should be built against distortions, but to relegate the State to the role of passivity would help in the perpetuation of poverty and backwardness. The State has to be preserved, but it cannot be allowed to be liquidated.

Two essential facts of India have to be kept in mind. First, the poor and the vulnerable strata of society look towards the State for protection and livelihood. It is because of some important initiatives of the State that the disabled and deprived strata of the Indian society have got a social space to stand up and survive. The social legislation by the State in favour of the Scheduled Castes have provided them with some economic and legal opportunities to live with some self-respect and honour. The hand of the State is visible in whatever limited successes have been achieved by the poorest of the poor.

Second, the Indian state has to safeguard the sovereignty of the country against foreign intervention and exploitation. Economic development of India cannot take place if the Indian State is not able to defend the Indian market against unwanted and undesirable foreign penetration. The Indian State has to bargain and intervene in the contemporary international situation which is heavily loaded against all developing countries. A weak and vulnerable Indian State cannot stand against mounting external pressures and if external pressures are not checked, economic development of the country cannot

take place. How can local resources be controlled if the State is incapable of standing against external pressures for control over our resources and raw material?

The anti-state feature of voluntary agencies in India is a borrowed theme from the Western capitalist societies. At best, the voluntary societies in India can supplement State efforts, they cannot supplement or supersede the efforts of social reconstruction launched by the State.

The foundations of Indian society have to be shaken before development becomes an ongoing process, and the Indian State has to be subjected to democratic pressures to perform this fundamental task. The voluntary agencies cannot perform the basic tasks of regeneration of India.

The differences between the roles of Indian State and voluntary agencies are quite clear. First, the essential tasks of development have to be undertaken by the Indian State, and the voluntary agencies cannot perform this task. Second, the voluntary agencies cannot change the social power structure, but the State can be democratically compelled to challenge the existing social power structure. Third, voluntary agencies are localised groups, the State intervention affects the whole society and reaction against the State also emerges from the society. Fourth, voluntary agencies can become parallel centres of power, and at that juncture they cease to be voluntary agencies.

The State versus voluntary agencies is a spurious issue in India because the problems of India cannot be tackled without intervention by the State. The voluntary agencies are a footnote in Indian development, and the problems of development of India require more of State intervention and not less of it.

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Voluntarism and Development— Theoretical Perspectives

M.A. MUTTALIB

"FREEDOM OF association is rightly regarded as taking high rank among the liberties of man. It is a liberty of the widest scope, for man may wish to associate for any purpose which two or more of them have in common. They may wish to associate to do something together, or to get something done to further their own or other people's interest to resist oppression or injustice or to practise either to pursue great or small, general or particular object...."¹ Voluntary associations are an embodiment of this freedom. Also, they are a manifestation of the caring instinct, the test of a truly civilised society.² They become more common and significant as societies advance in technology, complexity, and scale....³

SOURCES OF VOLUNTARISM

The term 'voluntarism' is derived from Latin word 'voluntas' which means 'will'. The will assumes various forms of impulses, passions, appetites or desires. It is prior to or superior to the intellect or reason. All theories of voluntarism, whether psychological, ethical, theological or metaphysical which interpret various aspects of experience and nature in the light of the concept of the will, subscribe to the thesis.⁴ It is the will that may produce 'miracles'--and thereby, some of the social evils, of which the unfortunate sections of the society are the victims, can be eradicated.

All voluntary associations which are the expression of human impulse (will), have been the subject of study of, by and large, three disciplines: sociology, social psychology and public administration. Sociologists, whose contribution is significant in this regard, study the associations as part of the social system; social psychologists are concerned with voluntary associations in an environment of their individual members; and the students of public administration with their organisational processes.

No comprehensive research effort is so far made to explore the

motivating sources of voluntarism. Inequality among individuals is a perennial source of motivation for voluntary action in any society, whatever be the stage of its development. Inequality may be in material, moral or intellectual terms. A.F.C. Bourdillon observed⁵ that there is always an element of betterment of compensating inequality motivating individuals to volunteer their services. Social services are designed to help compensate for the inequality and to uplift the under-privileged. The minimum standard which the community can tolerate, he added, for its citizens, is not static. It moves forward from one sphere of activity to another.

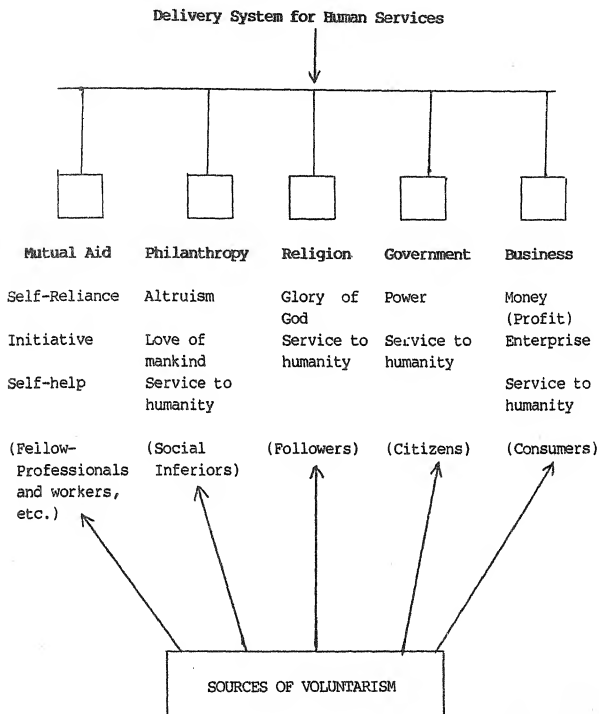
The term 'volunteer' is normally used to denote someone who offers unpaid service to a good cause. Bourdillon remarks that every voluntary organisation is the product of the blood, sweat and toil of a few individuals, who were known for their persistent efforts for achievement of their sincere aspirations.

One may identify five sources of voluntarism (shown in Chart on next page): religion, government, business, philanthropy and mutual aid if the delivery system for human services is analysed.

The missionary zeal of religious organisations, the commitment of government organisations to the public interest, the profit-making urge in business, the altruism of the 'social superiors' and the motive of self-help among fellow men, all reflect in voluntarism. At the operational level, the above mentioned components may not differ much from one another but each of them is moved by an impulse with service as the common motivation.

Bourdillon and William Beveridge viewed mutual aid and philanthropy as the two main sources from which voluntary social service organisations would have developed. They spring from individual and social conscience, respectively. Bourdillon observed that the schemes based on these two motivating factors, are converging on each other and it is this mixture of the two elements which is peculiarly characteristic of the voluntary organisations today.

G.D.H. Cole identified the problem of poverty as the point of focus in all types of associations. One essential element is that of philanthropy, pure and simple, which has been always present, but with it has been mingled, from time to time, motives and impulses which have changed greatly from age to age, attributing the sufferings of the poor people either to religious or secular roots. Some of the most ardent social reformers of the 18th century and early 19th century, who wanted to do many things, were insistent that it must keep its hand off education. They drew the line between physical welfare, which the State could legitimately arrange to promote, and intellectual and moral welfare, which was a matter outside the scope of political action.⁶



William Beveridge put forward the idea of expansion of the social welfare cake by enunciating the concept of social insurance against the giant evils of want, disease, ignorance and squalor and the citizens' entitlement to welfare as of right, a kind of social security against misfortunes.⁷

Cole believed that although religion and social service have been most intimately intertwined in the early stages of voluntary organizations, there have been philanthropists at all times, who were not moved by religious motives. Along with changing impulses, which

removed the upper class philanthropists in doing good to their 'social inferiors' with the welfare State, these inferiors began to play a significant part in looking after those and creating associations of their own, instead of receiving passively and as individuals, the benefaction of the well-to-do.⁸

With the acceptance of the obligation of the State to ensure for all its citizens a basic minimum standard of life, the State emerged as the major philanthropist. But the voluntarists and advocates of the right of the needy to be maintained at the hands of the State, did not see eye to eye with in the early stages of the new development. The voluntarists were looked with suspicion in every thing done under their auspices.⁹

Nevertheless, it soon proved to be a passing phase in the developed countries, with the realisation of their mutual roles. Now there is no reason, as Cole remarked, to suppose that as the scope of State action expands, the scope of voluntary social service necessarily contracts. On the other hand, its character changes in conformity, both with the changing views of the problem of State action and with the growth of the spirit and substance of democracy. It transforms itself, as Cole added, gradually from benevolence *de haut en bas* often involving what seems to us, now-a-days, a detestably humiliating condition, even when the spirit of the promoters was one of its benevolence into communal service a design to widen and deepen the expression of the spirit of democratic cooperation. Indeed, as he remarked, as long as there are rich and poor, a social service will necessarily continue in some degree and reflect inequalities of class and income.¹⁰

SCOPE AND EXTENT OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

The term voluntary association is variously defined. Michael Banton, an anthropologist, characterised it as a group organised for the pursuit of one interest or of several interests in common. Usually, it is contrasted with involuntary groups serving a greater variety of ends, such as kin groups, castes, social classes and communities.¹¹

David L. Sills, a sociologist, identified it as a group of persons, organised on the basis of voluntary membership without State control, for the furtherance of some common interest of its members.¹² A more recent development is the government-developed and--mandated programmes seeking increasing citizen participation--specially the poor--through creation of necessary, local structures although some viewed them as contradictory to the autonomy of voluntary associations.¹³ Sills excluded three types of similar

associations: (i) making-a-living association (like business firms, trade associations, production, marketing and consumer cooperatives, professional associations and labour unions; (ii) religious organisations; and (iii) political parties. He contended that membership in such voluntary associations as labour unions or professional societies, may be a condition of employment or professional factor and, thus, may not be truly voluntary. Membership in a church or in a family may be inherited from one's parents and in that sense, not voluntary. Nor they are drafted into them as in the case with military, as observed by Constance Smith and Ann Freedman.¹⁴

Bourdillon approved of these exclusions for different reasons, more specifically articulated. He observed that religious bodies' primary purpose is glory and service to God; political parties and organisations' primary purpose is to gain power; and organisations which may make provision for social well-being, but actually may have primary economic motives behind them. He also excluded two other types of organisations--one based strictly on insurance policies, where payments are made by members in consideration of certain specific benefits to be drawn by them; and the other, pursuing 'art for arts sake'.¹⁵

Sills was not, however, fully convinced with the exclusion category. Hence, he was closer to the conclusion of the study of the British National Council of Social Services (conducted in 1979), when it remarked that it would be ideal to pretend that these criteria, by themselves, provided a watershed category; there are many anomalies and the boundaries of voluntary action are inevitably blurred. There is an uneasy and indistinct line, for example, between voluntary organisation in receipt of government funding and 'quangos' (quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations), such as the 'Equal Opportunity Commission' or BBC, created by a statute or charter. Similar is the case with professional associations and trade unions, whose realm of action overlaps.

Norman Johnson, who examined at length in his recent study the various definitions of voluntary social services, found their turning on four factors:¹⁶ (i) method of formation, which is voluntary on the part of a group of people; (ii) method of government, with self-governing organisation to decide on its constitution, its servicing, its policy and its clients; (iii) method of financing, with at least some of its revenues drawn from voluntary sources; and (iv) motives with the pursuit of profit excluded.¹⁷

Legal status is another debatable issue receiving serious attention. Sills held that whether a voluntary association is incorporated or not, it has few consequences for its activities. Nevertheless, in the Indian context, the distinction has assumed

importance for their financial accountability. Now it is clearly suggested that only those voluntary associations would be considered for grant-in-aid which are incorporated and have been existing for at least three years.¹⁸ If the former condition provides a legal basis of relationship, the latter assures some amount of organisational stability. Both will help secure formalisation and enforce financial accountability.

Smith and Freedman considered voluntary association as a structure formally organised, relatively permanent, secondary grouping as opposed to less structured, informal, ephemeral or primary grouping.¹⁹ Formal organisation, they said, is identified by the presence of offices which are filled through some established procedures, scheduled meetings, qualifying criteria for membership and some formalised division and specialisation of labour, although the organisations do not necessarily exhibit all these characteristics to the same degree.

With the increasing involvement of voluntary organisations in welfare development, they have to sacrifice substantially their autonomy. There are quite a few restrictions which voluntary associations have to accept if they expect public grant. These are regulatory in character.

In India, for instance, religion besides politics, is the other social sphere from which they have to keep themselves away if they wish to seek public money for participation in nation-building activities. This is in consonance with Indian secularism which prohibits use of public money for propagation of any religion.

In fact, besides the above mentioned specific conditions, a more comprehensive framework is determined for them. Thus, like the statutory agencies, they must be committed to national objectives, namely, socialism, secularism, democracy, national unity and integrity. Although they may restrict their autonomy, they help smoothen their freedom without national obligations.

TYPOLOGIES

Voluntary associations have been classified on a variety of bases: (i) their size, (ii) their internal political structure, (iii) their independence or dependence on outside control, (iv) their societal functions, (v) source of their support, (vi) their location, (vii) the class and characteristics of their members, (viii) intimacy of contact among members, (ix) bases of the incentives—material, solidary or purposive, and (x) beneficiary of the association's activities—prime beneficiary may be the membership, the client, the public or the owners²⁰.

Some writers have employed either structure or function as basis of classification. For example, Sherwood Fix based his classification after examining 5000 associations upon the distinction between majoral, minoral and medial organisations.²¹ Majoral associations are those which serve the interest of the majority institutions of society, such as business, professional, scientific, educational, labour and agricultural associations. Minoral associations serve the interest of significant minority in the population, such as women's clubs, church organisations, hobby clubs and above all, ethnics. Medical associations mediate between major segments or institutions in the society. For example, a parent-teacher association mediates between the family and the school system.

David L. Sills developed a structural distinction between corporate type and federal type organisation to analyse the problem of organisational structure and control in national organisations, while others have used other structural variables like accessibility or eligibility for membership as a basis for classification.²²

PSYCHOLOGY OF 'JOINING'

The psychology of joining voluntary associations and their continued membership, has been a subject of great interest for research. Impulses of a great variety move men for their grouping to serve themselves, their fellowmen or the unfortunate lot of the society. They are idealistic, educative, psychological and social in character operating separately or on varying combinations. The analysis of these impulses also highlights the services the voluntary associations perform for their members.

Idealistic Impulses

As Smith and Freedman analysed, there are liberals in the T.H. Green tradition who argued that voluntary associations have preserved democracy and their experience of interacting with others in an association helped to preserve the individual's personality²³. Thus, there are those who maintain that partnership between the statutory and voluntary agencies, for social services is essential for the general health of the society.²⁴

Educative Impulses

It is asserted that the voluntary association is a strong agent of political socialisation in a democracy. It gives its members training and practice in political skills and inculcates in them the belief and values required to keep the political system functioning properly.²⁵

The functions of association also help train the individuals in organisational skills and integrate them into the social milieu. This gives them an opportunity to learn social norms and acquire information and combat loneliness.

Further, James Bryce approved of the views of Tocqueville when he remarked that the executive talent of the people shine in the association of individuals with voluntary institutions. Bryce also observed that such associations help create new centres of force and motion and nourishes young causes and unpopular doctrines into self-confident aggressiveness.²⁶

Psychological Impulses

Arnold Rose noticed socio-psychological aspects of joining voluntary institutions. The individuals who belong to groups, his study reported, had more friends, held optimistic attitudes, expressed greater satisfaction with the lives and had more confidence in society.²⁷

Barnard Barber was, however, critical of the apathetic and inactive role of individual members with their specific and segmental character. This, he argued, results in oligarchy which retains power for many years without any significant challenge to its reign. The development of oligarchy, he added, is also the outcome of structural factors, such as specialisation and hierarchical structure of authority which develops and enables the organisation to be more effective with its environment. Those who fill positions in the hierarchy, acquire knowledge and skill, and develop a personal interest in maintaining their position, which differentiates them from the average member and make it possible for them to hold on to these position.²⁸

Sills, in his scholarly contribution, observed that the associations integrate minority groups into a larger society and offer a legitimate locus for the affirmation and expression of values governed in the sense of making decisions on policy and providing services to citizens, initiate social change and distribute power.²⁹

The anthropologists viewed the associations as part of social change. To Banton their emergence speaks of shift in the membership from involuntary to voluntary groupings.³⁰ Arnold Rose analysed the phenomenon as the weakening trend of social institutions, like family, church and community in the USA. With their working influence, the individual turns to voluntary associations for security, for self-expression and for satisfaction of his interests.³¹

Social Impulses

Sociologists have studied the psychology of membership with the

motivating interests in view, namely, community, class, ethnic, religious, sex, age, etc. Scott Greer divided individuals into three types:³² (i) community actors, who are members of locally based voluntary organisations and are informed about the community affairs; (ii) neighbours who participate in the neighbourhood, but not in the local community; (iii) isolates, who are not involved at either level. The study indicated that a parameter in political or intermediary structure of voluntary associations does exist between the citizens and the State and that the citizens who are not involved in this structure have interacted with the political system largely through the mass media and are far from a majority.

Some of the pluralists have argued that the association gives the individual a feeling of community with his fellow-men along with the opportunity to make the rules by which he must abide.³³

Then, some have noticed that membership has class-bias where socio-economic interest has motivated the joining of associations. The upper-middle class individuals are much more likely to hold membership than lower class. Moreover, the membership of given groups has been found to be largely homogenous in terms of class, ethnicity and religion.³⁴

A survey conducted by the Survey Research Centre of the University of Michigan has shown that joiners are more affluent, better educated and more active in politics than non-joiners.³⁵

The reverse seems to be natural. Accordingly, some studies have revealed that there are lower participation rates in the lower classes and, more so, in blue-collar workers: for financial considerations or social relationship largely because of personal and primary reasons and their minimal commitment to the impersonal or the secondary relationship of the society beyond the family; or because of less trust in the larger community and fatalistic feelings that they are powerless to change the world.³⁶

Then, among the joiners, Charles Wright and Herbert Hyman noted that characteristic of one particular cultural group than other. For instance, in the USA it is more of white rather than the Negro population, of Jewish rather than Protestant persons, or Protestants rather than Catholics, of urban and rural non-farm residents than of rural-farm residents. Membership is directly related to socio-economic status, as measured by level of income, occupation, house ownership, level of living and education.³⁷

Among the liberal democratic countries of Europe, the Danish Government has not been found hostile to development of voluntary associations, unlike the French Government. In France, the law makes them relatively difficult. Rose and Gallagher have identified that the French tradition of relying on the government for action

concerning matters of public health and welfare also are at least, partly responsible for this situation.³⁸

By and large, various studies revealed that greater interest is evinced in joining voluntary associations in urban areas than rural. Immanuel Wallerstein asserts that high proportion of individuals in the cities even in developing societies of the West Africa, belonged to voluntary associations and that the average individual belonged to several of them.³⁹

Sex is also a factor in identifying joining psychology. Between men and women, Babchuk, Marsey and Gordon discovered that men dominate the directing boards of most agencies, specially those with large budgets, perform instrumental functions and are regarded most vital to the community.⁴⁰ Women join organisations depending upon their family status and the stage they occupy in the family cycle. They are more interested in maintenance and improvement of their self images, in terms of the values accorded to certain role behaviour by the society.⁴¹

Age also has a bearing on joining or continuing membership of associations. Rose noted that participation in voluntary associations declined as people grew old, even though many of them have more leisure time in their retirement than they had when they were working. This may be partly a result of change in location and role at the onset of old age.⁴²

Thus, the psychology of joining is a complex phenomenon. It may vary from one individual to another and one group of individuals to another, depending on their culture, social milieu and political environment.

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND THE SOCIETY

Voluntary associations may be viewed at from two angles: those performing roles for their own members and those for the society. The former have been largely covered in their psychology to join associations.

Studies have not fully established the type of functions carried out by associations in relation to the society. There are two conflicting views about their role in the process of social change. Smith and Freedman approved of the validity of the view that voluntary associations often promote modernisation of society. Arthur H. Schlesinger also stressed the positive side of their functions. He contended that they impart training to individuals in self-government, help integrate the minorities with the nation and provide a safety valve in their tensions and ambitions generated by modern life. They may also educate the public and thereby, promote social

reform.

But there is an evidence that the associations hinder modernisation or at the very least, strengthen traditional social institutions. Other studies pointed out that they do not by themselves initiate social change, although they may support it.⁴³

There is greater participation of the upper and middle classes in the voluntary associations for whom they perform a number of functions.⁴⁴ Mary Bosworth Treudly, who studied the Greek minority in Boston, identified the voluntary associations cushioning the shock of transition to new society; offer incentives for adopting to that society, providing setting in which to practise American behaviour and leadership techniques and articulating the group consensus in regard to choice of culture pattern.⁴⁵

Then, there are scholars who are critical of their roles. Rousseau, the political theorist of French democracy, viewed private associations with some hostility. He believed that their 'partial sides' prevent the complete expression of the general will. The Burkean position is not very much different. To him, a strong government is not the sole source of injustice. On the other hand, a feeble government, which gives free reign to factional non-governmental groups, may be just as oppressive. Alexander Hamilton considered private groups as dangerous to public interest.⁴⁶

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND THE POLITICAL CULTURE

Relatively little is actually known about the political dimension of the role of voluntary associations.⁴⁷ However, research studies carried out in the United States, Germany, Mexico, Italy and Britain, as reported in 1963 in *The Civic Culture*, provide strong support for the theory that voluntary associations "play a major role in a democratic political culture". Almond and Verba concluded from a research study carried out in India that the organisational member compared with the non-member is likely to consider himself more competent as a citizen to be a more active participant in politics and to know and care about politics. He is, therefore, more likely to be close to the model of the democratic citizens. The study has revealed that economic development needs greater rate of political participation, because associated with the economic development is an expanding organisational infrastructure. Special class and organisational life are the components of economic development, which most strongly affect mass political participation. Further, organisational involvement appeared to have stronger impact on the political participation than social status.⁴⁸

Then, there are theorists who view voluntary associations as an

integral part of democratic political order and, hence, characterising them as a threat to non-democratic government. Historically, either they have been outlawed or severely restricted in all non-democratic states. Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski and other political scientists viewed the absence of private and non-government organisations as a significant trait of totalitarianism.⁴⁹

A very significant light is cast on developments in Russia where the voluntary principle is at a strong discount. It is stated that two bodies act in close collaboration for the welfare of the hypothesis: One state body and the other state-subsidised voluntary association.⁵⁰

Pluralists maintained that a democratic system requires multitude of independent, voluntary, non-government associations as buffer between the individual and the State preventing the habit of exercise of government power and contributing to maintenance of the policy by educating or socialising the citizenry. Individuals are expected to learn the fundamentals of group and political action through participation in the governing of their private organisations.⁵¹ This is crucial because, in this view, a man is free only when he makes and accepts his own will, the rules under which he must live. Alexis d' Tocqueville, a great French social scientist, observed that if the English seem to regard association as only one of several "powerful means of action" the American appears to regard association as the "only means". He found the Americans as a "nation of joiners" and thought that they were even more addicted to associations than the English. Tocqueville perceived a connection between proliferation of private groups and the egalitarian and democratic character of the society. Since individuals in an egalitarian society are weak, in contrast to the aristocratic individuals in the European social order, Tocqueville added, the citizens become powerless if they do not learn voluntarily to help one another. In the absence of freedom of association, he contended that civilization itself would be endangered and the individual may soon lapse into barbarism.⁵²

However, diametrically opposed to the American and British experiences, the French and the Germans present a weak tradition of voluntary associations. The pluralistic society of the USA provides strongest evidence of the American belief in them to protect and support the individual and integrate him in democratic habit. The strong French central government along with the Catholic tradition encompassing the individual within the Church, and the German corporatist tradition opposed to individualism, explains the phenomena⁵³ in this respect.

There are writers like Kornhauser, who have studied the division of society into three levels, with the voluntary associations and the

local community falling into intermediate level, sandwiched between the family (the first level of family or personal relation), and the State (on the third level of societal relation). He argues that the intermediate level institutions help maintain democracy and freedom in several ways. While they protect elite from excessive pressures by the masses and preserve their effective leadership, they provide the social base for free and open competition for leadership posts, wide spread participation in selection of leaders and curb the power of the elite by preventing them from exploiting the masses.⁵⁴

Grant McConnell indentified in his study the dangers of power held by private groups in American politics without adequate check. His assessment is that far from providing guarantees or liberty, equality and concern of the public interest, organisation of political life by small constituencies tends to enforce conformity to discriminate in favour of elites and to eliminate public values from affected political considerations. McConnell viewed this process as a threat to public interest.⁵⁵

Theodore Lowi felt that the costs of interest group liberalism are high. The ideology results in atrophy of institutions of popular control by handing over control of programmes to organised groups, thereby shutting out the public and its representatives in Congress and in the Presidency; it also helps to maintain and create new structures of privilege and it results in conservatism insofar as resistance to change is strengthened.⁵⁶

From his Christian viewpoint, W. Alvin Pitcher questioned Williams Kornhauser's belief that increased participation in private groups is an adequate guarantee of a good society. In Pitcher's view, "participation in intermediate organisations represents a sickness of the soul rather than its health".⁵⁷

Riesman had argued in *The Lonely Crowd* that no one really runs things in America; that power is dispersed among a number of "veto groups" each of which is strong enough to prevent the other from leading, but not strong enough to lead itself.⁵⁸

There are pluralists who see voluntary associations as part of the American elite system. At the local level, voluntary associations serve as recruiting groups for the elite. The elites who represent the various interests in the society, are largely the heads of big private organisations.

V.D. Key, an American political analyst, identified the place of associations in the political arena.⁵⁹ He divided the populace on the basis of political activity into three major divisions: (i) the political activist at the top, the "professional politicism, the semi-professional, and the highly placed individuals in corporate, associational and community life who have political sidelines and

connections"; (ii) a middle group of individuals who engage in such political acts as attending rallies and meetings and may enter into active ranks on occasion; and (iii) the inactive mass at the bottom composed of individuals whose major political activity is voting and of those who take no interest at all in politics. Stein Rokkan cites a UNESCO sponsored survey of West Germany which indicated that belonging to non-political organisations increased the likelihood of an individual's holding membership in a political party. No matter what the party's allegiance, leaders have more ties to other organisations than do voters. Politics appeared to be only one of the many community activities of the Liberal Party leaders who were discovered to be much more involved in religious, charitable, humanitarian and community-centred organisations than the leaders of other parties.⁶⁰ The survey of a small suburb of Tokyo found the familiar relationship between political activities and participation in voluntary associations. In Japan, 'joiners' were more likely to take an active political role than the non-joiners.⁶¹

Arnold M. Rose reported that politicians are good joiners for many reasons. Affiliations provide them with channels of personal contact with partial electorate and provide the latter with a sense of general identity with the public officials. Thus, membership in voluntary associations helps the politician. Politicians tend to be gregarious. If a person does not like to associate with others, he is unlikely to go into politics. An affiliation with some social influence associations sometimes provides the extra bit of motivation and self-confidence that leads a man to try for public office.⁶² The Berkeley Group also confirmed the Rose's theme of research.⁶³

If the voluntary associations themselves participate directly in politics as a pressure group, political actors use them to build support in their policies. But Banfield maintained that the associations are reluctant to become involved in controversies, although they have to give the appearance of being active in order to retain their members.⁶⁴

Peter Rossi's study revealed that voluntary associations play an integrative role. There is some evidence that government officials see voluntary associations as links between the government and the citizens.⁶⁵

INDIAN SEARCH FOR VOLUNTARY ACTION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

India has had long tradition of voluntary services for the uplift of the underprivileged like women, children and others. But it has an imperial heritage with administrative traditions and behaviour imperceptably but effectively inhibiting their growth. For, they

promote or permit such organisations only under the official patronage and many such organisations originated as a result of an impulse from the West like The Scout Movement, the Red Cross, the Rotary Club, the Lion's Club, etc. They are all town-based and in the hands of westernised university graduates. Further, in villages, often faction-ridden, the formal structure with regular elections, hardens the faction into existing mould as has been the experience with Panchayati Raj.

The post-Independence era has witnessed a phenomenal increase in the number of voluntary agencies with the introduction of Community Development programmes. The planners recognised their role in the First Five-Year Plan document itself in the field of social welfare. The Third Plan characterised the voluntary action as an aspect of public cooperation. The Sixth Plan noted the voluntary agencies with a rise in grant-in-aid from a mere Rs. 4 crore during the First Plan to Rs. 83 crore during the Fifth Plan. On August 20, 1987 the Government of India announced to enlist their cooperation to meet the drought situation in several states.

The Planning Commission raised in the Approach Paper for the Seventh Plan a crucial issue of an alternative monitoring machinery to lend a hand to the development bureaucracy for meeting the problem at hand to reach aid with faster pace to the poor, and thus hit the 20-Point Programme target designed for the weaker sections. The Commission itself identified voluntary agencies as the alternative mechanism for the purpose.

The Planning Commission made a beginning in this direction in 1982 itself when the then Prime Minister, in a letter to the Chief Ministers of the states, emphasised the need for widening the role of voluntary agencies for implementation of the 20-Point Programme with a suggestion to set up a Consultative Group of Voluntary Agencies under the chairmanship of either the Chief Secretary or the Development Commissioner. Periodic meetings of such groups were proposed to give valuable feedback on the actual implementation of the scheme and to help sorting out problems affecting the work of the voluntary agencies.

Once the voluntary organisations are chosen, they would be receiving funds through Programmes by Action in Development India (PADI), which is an autonomous organisation sponsored by the Ministry of Rural Development. PADI fairly elaborates the scheme of measures to ensure that funds allocated are properly utilised.

In order to elicit opinion on the new strategy, the Yojana brought out its special issue with views of 15 men of public standing--one former Minister for Community Development and Cooperation, one present and one former member of the Planning Commission, one senior

civil servant, two consultants of the Planning Commission, a journalist, eminent social workers and distinguished economists and other academics.

A number of issues had been posed to the respondents as follows: proper selection of voluntary organisations by the State Governments with different political parties in power; the desirability to ensure a degree of healthy competition between the bureaucratic machinery and the voluntary agencies; suitability of the voluntary agencies for the new role in the context of rumours of all sorts of foreign interests making inroads into their working, etc.

A wide spectrum of comments were received from the respondents. At one end of the spectrum were those who welcomed the move and considered that not only the voluntary agencies would do fill the slot, but also asserted that the government could not do without the selfless souls, who lived and worked in the midst of the poor.⁶⁶ At the other end of the spectrum were those who characterised the move as a casual or even careless attitude to the Plan.⁶⁷ It was asserted by them that alleviating poverty is a serious business and assigning any role to the voluntary agencies in this endeavour was an anachronism and a false alternative. In between these two, diametrically opposite views were several variations, ranging between those who warned the pitfalls and shortcomings of such a move and those impressing the need to draw lessons from: (a) the Panchayati Raj bodies and cooperative societies,⁶⁸ and (b) the possible obstruction of the work of the voluntary associations from a hostile rural development bureaucracy.⁶⁹

Those who warned the pitfalls of voluntary agencies, suggested that their role should be confined to stimulating, innovating, piloting and delivering certain types of programmes of social nature rather than development area which requires massive action in terms of human and financial resources.⁷⁰

In the above mentioned context, and its own experience with the voluntary associations, the Planning Commission laid down several prerequisites as a body of their entitlement for grant-in-aid.⁷¹

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENTS IN PARTNERSHIP

Some of the comments, however, like those with a bearing on the bureaucratic behaviour and attitude towards autonomous institutions and the rigid legal control over them remain unanswered. It is against this background that the State level voluntary consultative boards and national forums for evolving parameters for flow of funds will go a long way specially when the bureaucracy is steeped in regulatory ethos and accountable only to its own hierarchy within the

system with little care for smooth delivery of services to the rural clientele.

Then, the air of suspicion that permeates the relationship between the government and the voluntary associations is the most discouraging aspect for the dedicated and devoted 'noble souls' involved in this endeavour. This raises the importance of selection of right type of associations spelt out by the Planning Commission, specially in the context of their ideological commitment if prejudicial to national objectives.

The recent resurgence of voluntarism, whether in UK or USA, is indicative of the realisation of the limitation of the State to ensure the welfare of all its citizens on the one hand, and the recognition of the voluntary contribution to the personal social service, on the other. Also, it illustrates the appreciation of the voluntary action which can often be more cost-effective than statutory welfare provision, thereby cutting down the growing welfare state expenditure.⁷²

The policy of the Government of India is based on the assumption that the voluntary organisations have spare capacity at present or they can increase it fairly readily. But the very question of the desirability of expanding voluntary services at the expense of statutory provisions calls for closer examination. There are certain features of the voluntary system that cast doubts on the wisdom of such a change.

One question relates to the degree of accountability in the voluntary sector and the internal democracy of its constituent organisations. Accountability is one of the basic requirements of a democratic system. The system of accountability for the statutory social services is much more highly developed than it is in the voluntary sector. Any transfer of responsibility from statutory to voluntary agency might mean a diminution of democratic accountability and control.

Various forms of accountability exist when voluntary social service organisations receive a considerable proportion of their funds from the statutory sources. In these circumstances, not unreasonably, the statutory agencies require at least an account of how the money has been spent. The only other form of accountability can be through registration with the Registrar of Societies to which accounts must be submitted annually. Today the Registrar is not equipped with the requisite mechanism for the purpose; hence, commensurate equipment should be contemplated.

Besides, account must also be taken of their internal political arrangements,⁷³ specially in the context of operations of Michael's Iron Law of Oligarchy. The unrepresentative nature of many organised

groups with their representing a narrow sectional interest and representing a minority of the group they claim to speak for, is another aspect of the phenomenon. Seyd described the Shelter Management Committee as being completely self-appointed and self-perpetrated. Halifix M. Morris gave the general impression of voluntary organisations that committee members hold office for a long time, usually for as long as they can be pursued to do so and that it is difficult to recruit new blood. In India, often they are noticed as "one man's show"--the natural haunt of strong individuals. With the departure of 'the builder' in such organisations, they also fade away unless the "second line of defence" is in readiness to take over.

Certain distinctions in the approach to development and the method of administration are, however, attributed to the voluntary agencies as revealed in the NIRD's study.⁷⁴ Flexibility, personal touch, easy accessibility, client groups, capacity to initiate the experiment with new programmes, stimulation and mobilisation of resources of the community, sensitivity to field problem, self-help and self-reliance are the strong points of voluntary organisation. They have terms of reference, wide and general enough to meet the needs of the whole man.

If the voluntary organisations are to grow without becoming institutions, bureaucratic tendencies should be checked. First their continued financial dependence on the government bureaucracy will tend to inject bureaucratic culture among them specially when it enjoys greater discretionary role in sanctioning grant-in-aid. Secondly, employment of professionals on an increasing scale and the consequent reduction of unpaid volunteers make the formalisation cycle of the voluntary associations complete. Finally, the goal displacement tendencies arising out of the active participants' intention to retain their 'position' in tact and their rigid adherence to organisational procedure, all contribute to treatment of rules and procedures as ends in themselves.

But their characteristic feature, what Peter Blau calls "goals succession", will keep their bureaucratic tendencies in check. This is possible because of their dynamic character in taking up new responsibilities as pioneers in social welfare and the government's obligation to take over their functions under the pressure of public opinion.

SUMMING UP

The caring instinct, urging volunteering of services, is a global phenomenon. All religions have fostered it. All forms of government have taken a pride in assuming it as their obligation in the course

of time. All organisations, whether they are after power or profit, demonstrate their willingness to promote it. Indeed, of the three principal sources of human thrust--namely, power, money and service--service is the noblest. Where the other two are kept at bay, the voluntary institutions will be at their best. No intervention would be called for either by the government or by the people.

All groups of people, irrespective of race, colour, sex, age, place of birth and socio-economic status, are moved by service motive. The difference between one group and another in this respect is of degree, arising out of the environmental, socio-economic and political milieu in which they live.

Societies, with a heritage of authoritarian forms of social and political institutions, inhibit the growth of voluntary organisations. With the weakening trend of primary social institutions--like family, caste, church, etc.-- they start striking firm roots. This is increasingly visible with the increasing pace of urbanisation and advancement of society in technology and science.

The social phenomenon, which is conducive to the growth of voluntary organisations in their pure form, is the confluence of two broad currents, namely, philanthropy and mutual aid flowing from opposite directions converging into voluntarism. If the former is the contribution of the 'social superiors', the latter is that of the 'social inferiors', all engaged in a common endeavour in response to social conscience to reduce human sufferings arising out of all forms of inequality. To sum up, the virtues of this order have been numerous--perceived as the guarantee of freedom, the preservation of diversity, the limitation of power, the protection against mass movement and irrationality in politics and the provision of remaining in common life.⁷⁵

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Role of Voluntarism in Development

N.R. INAMDAR

THE ROLE of voluntarism in social and economic development in developing polities can be understood properly only in the context of the prevailing patterns of political system and of political economy in the respective countries. It would be difficult to draw generalisations regarding the nature of the participatory role, scope and mode of the functioning of voluntarism in the process of development in different polities in the Third World without comprehending the ambit of the State and the public authorities and their instrumentalities in development. The social and cultural milieu in the different polities is also to be counted as an influential factor in shaping their political economy, apart from the political ideology and the stage of economic development, along with the status of the private sector and the role of the capitalist and entrepreneurial class in it. It would be off the mark to inflate the role of voluntarism in development in the context of a democratic political system or to debunk it on account of the acceptance of the socialist pattern of economic development. The background of the ideology of democratic socialism has to be kept in view in order to properly grasp the role of voluntarism in development in a polity like the Indian. The role of voluntarism in development cannot just be wished away because socialism has been enshrined in the Constitution, nor can it be considered as the panacea for the problems of the country's development in the context of the non-authoritarian character of the frame of its economic planning.

EVOLUTION OF VOLUNTARISM

Voluntarism in development is characterised by the participation in the processes of economic production, exchange or distribution of non-state agencies, that is individuals, groups or associations, imbued with a certain common purpose or purposes, neither imposed from outside nor acquired with birth in the case of an individual.¹

Obviously the processes of economic production, exchange or distribution referred to here are outside the domain of these activities by private individuals or their families engaged in the course of own consumption and livelihood, and the corporate activities yielding profits to individuals or groups. The phenomenon of voluntarism in development is typical of the modern age, particularly since the industrial revolution in Europe during the nineteenth century and a little earlier. In the polities under the colonial rule of the European powers, the phenomenon of voluntarism appeared on the occurrence of the capitalist economic processes, but markedly since their independence from the colonial rule. Though the immediate context of the relevance of voluntarism in development is modern, its social and cultural roots and moorings are traceable to the ancient and medieval times in the case of a country like India possessing a historical legacy of rich socio-cultural (and economic) achievements.

In Ancient and Medieval Times

In India, before independence, in terms of scope of coverage in development activities, *laissez faire* occupied the largest portion, voluntary action through philanthropy, associational works and individual actions stood next, while state intervention came last. Here, 'development' excludes the infrastructural activity, like laying out of ports, railways and roads, setting up of communications in the form of posts and telegraphs or building up of essentials for capitalist development in banks, insurance companies, etc. 'Development' here includes instituting or extending facilities for agriculture, health and medicine, education and allied human development or enrichment aspects. After independence, state intervention claims the largest amount of development activity, while *laissez faire* would come next and voluntarism would have the lowest share of development activity. Voluntarism has receded into a negligible role in development because people in general in need of help, succour or assistance expect it to come from the government through its plan outlay. The scope of developmental planning has expanded more and more, successively, in each of the Seven Five Year Plans. At long last, the Seventh Five Year Plan had to caution explicitly that henceforward voluntarism had to come forward to play a greater role in development--rural and urban.² The abolition of the princely states dried up a source of philanthropy in development. The business and industry, another source of philanthropy in development, became reluctant to contribute funds for development due to alleged high taxation on them. The professions, the medicine, law and others, were exposed to increasing commercialisation, tending away from its role in development.

In ancient and medieval India, voluntarism operated freely and extensively in the fields of education, medicine, cultural promotion, and even succour in crises like droughts, floods, epidemics and foreign invasions or depredations by robbers and criminals. Pluralism played a great role in development, though restricted in scope, both by default of wide communication and transport network and the sway of the concept of 'Dharma' ('obligation'). People's conception of functions of the state (meaning mostly the king) was limited to maintenance of law and order and observance of good behaviour. Each unit of social organisation and government in the social and territorial hierarchy, viz., the individual, the family, the caste, the village, the temple, the guild, the town or city, the region and the highest level of government (mostly the king or emperor), owed certain responsibilities in development in the above restricted sense inherent in the conception of its own 'Dharma'. The ambit of 'Sasana', edicts or directives of the king/emperor, was restricted by the rules of the Dharma Shastras, the guild, the caste and the local governments. A general statement of a historian that the ancient Indian state "sought to promote the moral, material, aesthetic and spiritual progress of the whole community"³ is to be construed within the above parameters of the social and political organisations in the country in ancient and medieval times. The poor and the destitute, the sick, the distressed and the disabled, the widows and the orphans, the jobless and the old, were provided succour by different social organs. The agriculturists, the artisans and craftsmen, the traders and businessmen, the bankers and the professionals were helped out of difficulties by their colleagues in the occupation or profession. Philanthropy was widespread. The State came to the rescue of the community in extreme contingencies of helplessness. Kautilya's Arthashastra might have depicted the expanded bureaucratic hierarchies of a central government of the Maurya Empire⁴, indicating exceptional conditions of developed welfare-statism. The Gupta Empire also represented another instance of developed welfare-statism, though, incomparable in scope to the Maurya Empire. The paragon of the Mauryan welfare-statism was missed from the government of Harsha which followed a laissez faire policy.⁵

The large scope of voluntarism in development during ancient and medieval India, however, did not mitigate the social inequities of the rigid caste system, particularly heaped on the lower castes, especially the untouchables. The large-scale distress of and ravages on the people resulting from droughts, floods, pestilences, robberies, crime, foreign invasions or excessive exploitation by the monarch, the aristocracy or government officials could not be saved by voluntarism, howsoever beneficent was its role in normal times.

In Muslim and British Days

The above delineation of the role of voluntarism in development in ancient and medieval India was not affected much by the inroads of the Muslims and the establishment of their rule in different parts of the country, including the Mughal Empire at Delhi and Agra. In Muslim society also, the above mentioned norms of voluntarism were applied. Barring the benevolent regimes of rulers like Shershah and Akbar, the superimposition of another government, however, tended to entail heavier taxation and other levies on the peasants and other sections, which tended to depress their standard of life.⁶ Exemptions, concessions and moratoria were, however, granted in times of extraordinary difficulties.

During the British rule, voluntarism in development received a boost in new religious, cultural and social surroundings, though traditional sources of voluntarism lost the leaven and intensity. The laissez faire policy of the British government in economic, and apparently in religious and social matters left no other avenue of development open to the 'Natives' than resort to self-help, another term for voluntarism. The Christian missionary educational institutions and hospitals and dispensaries set an example to the non-convert majorities both among Hindus and Muslims to emulate. Schools and colleges were established by educational societies set up by English-educated natives and affluent businessmen, traders, zamindars and members of aristocracy, to impart Western education to the native children and youngsters. Pathshalas and madrassas imparting instruction in traditional learning, however, suffered an eclipse. Libraries and lecture series were another source of social renaissance that ushered in cultural development of a novel kind by voluntary associations. A new religious awakening was aroused by voluntary associations stabilised in due course in institutional form. Some of these kindled generated sentiments of religious and social reform. An awareness of the backward and suppressed conditions of the women, orphaned children and backward castes and communities was roused among the educated by social and religious reformers and the associations founded by them. Later, self-awareness among these hapless sections was generated, which in due course evolved into associational and institutional activity. Educational institutions, hospitals, clinics and dispensaries and welfare associations that were set up also grew, which to an extent ameliorated conditions of these hapless sections of the society. Voluntarism, thus, played a significant role in educational, health and medical and social welfare development in India during the latter half of the nineteenth and the first half of this century. Not that the extent of development achieved was such as to solve the problems of development

altogether, but a spirit of voluntarism was aroused which gained a wide social recognition as an avenue of development during the British rule, before independence.

During Days of National Movement

In contrast, with the growth of voluntarism in social and welfare development, new movements were not initiated in rural areas, including agricultural development except the cooperative credit movement in a few provinces, including Bombay and Madras. The original voluntary character of the cooperatives, however, was gradually overshadowed by the increasing state financial assistance to, and later underwriting of the credit cooperatives. In the industrial field, managing agency and other forms of legalised voluntary modes helped industrial and ancillary activity including banking and development in the country. The space of this article does not permit us to deal with this sphere of the role of voluntarism in development.

The national movement breathed a spirit of strengthening the normal fibre of the people through self-help and autonomy through independent institution building in education, industry, business and trade, and fostering of economic production, particularly of industrial goods through Swadeshi, i.e., own-factories, workshops and crafts and boycott of imported British goods. The triad creed of National Education, Swadeshi and Boycott were advocated by Tilak, Aurobindo and others during the first decade of this century to bolster Swarajya, the fourth component of the creed. Gandhi propagated the creed in the course of the Non-Cooperation Movement of the early twenties. National reconstruction on the basis of Swadeshi, Village Self Government and Village Self Sufficiency was actively canvassed by Gandhi, and he lent it institutional forms. Voluntarism, thus, secured a fresh lease in the national movement. Gandhi based it on the philosophy of spiritualism, of the soul-force or love-force⁷, which to him marked the Indian culture from the Western.

Gandhi considered Swaraj to be based on the freedom of every individual. He conceived each individual to be the master of the means of his livelihood.⁸ He was opposed to centralisation of the means of production either under the sway of socialism or communism. He reinforced the strength of Voluntarism in the economic aspect of national life by decentralisation of political authority to the gram-panchayats (village councils) which were to be completely independent of provincial or central government. He intended to build the latter on the foundation of the former. Gandhi's concept of Trusteeship would apparently make the capitalists hold the labourers in ransom. Vinoba Bhave has interpreted trusteeship to mean Vishwastabhava,

i.e., a feeling of mutual confidence, not only between the propertied and the labouring classes, but also between the rulers and the ruled so that the rulers with all the democratic checks and balances and the government's accountability to the people would discharge authority with a sense of responsibility towards the ruled.⁹ Gandhi wanted each agriculturist to own and operate the spinning wheel ('charkha') to supplement his meagre income from land and keep himself fully employed. Not only that, he desired different village crafts and industries to process the produce of the village from agriculture, cattle or other sources. He was not opposed to the use of machines as such, but he desired the machine to serve the man rather than the man being servile to the machine.¹⁰ Voluntarism, the foregoing discussion would bear out, was at the core of Gandhi's thinking on the reconstruction of India's economic and political organisation.

Another trend in Indian political economy before independence worked in the direction opposite to the trend of voluntarism. The exploitative nature of the economic implications of the British imperial policies in the country resulted in the insistent demands from the Indian nationalist movement for alternative protectionist (in the industrial sphere) and welfarist (in the agricultural and rural spheres) state developmental policies.¹¹ In education, larger government grants-in-aid to the schools and colleges were asked for besides sizable state investment in technical education. In agriculture, lowering of land revenue assessment level, if not, stabilising it at the prevailing rates, was pressed. Greater financial, technical and material help was expected from the government to raise productivity of land. Increased medical and health aid was demanded to stem the high death rate and to improve the standard of health of the mothers, infants, and other people. These instances of demands for state interventionism and consequent construction of laissez faire or voluntarism in development can be multiplied. At the time of country's independence, therefore, both these trends of voluntarism and state interventionism in development subsisted side by side in the economic and social spheres of national life.

GOVERNMENT AND VOLUNTARY BODIES: A CRITIQUE ON RELATIONSHIP

Pluralism in development instrumentalities in the form of various voluntary associations, institutions and groups, besides governmental mechanisms and public authorities, is essential to preserve democratic freedoms and way of life in the country enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Where lone individuals are helpless, voluntary organisations formed by these individuals can be effective.

Undertaking of the planned model of development since 1950 has been done within the frame of a parliamentary democracy and a constitution guaranteeing liberal freedoms to individuals, groups, associations and institutions. As stated earlier in the article, planning in the country has a tendency to envelop new areas and aspects of economic and social life and activity on account of various reasons. The unsatisfied wants and needs of the poor; the imbalances, conflicts and incompatibilities occurring within the economic and social processes due to development itself; urgency to reduce concentration of wealth and incomes and hence to curb monopolies; compulsions to catch up with galloping scientific and technological progress in the world and to maintain national security; and such other emergent reasons, have tended to widen the ambit of planned development. This tendency aggravates the trend of concentration of greater economic powers and political authority in the government which means bureaucracy and political persons. All said and done, the bureaucrats and politicians are human beings, and like all other human beings they are not immune from frailties and complexes to misuse of power and authority. Further, the governments and public authorities seek to mould the pattern of development; programmes, schemes and projects, in the way of their own thinking, practice and routine. Stereotypes tend to grow and ossify, and to stultify innovations in development content and modalities. Governments are slow to innovate because they are too big and the informality and initiative are, by and large lacking in them. Great and path-breaking leadership in both political executives and bureaucracy is necessary to innovate in development. Voluntary associations, groups and institutions can innovate and set new paths in schemes and projects, and thus project comparative illustrations before the governments and public authorities in the field of development. The voluntary organisations can also modulate the details of a programme, scheme or project to suit the requirements of particular localities of clientele groups or changed circumstances.

This does not imply that the voluntary entities are free from faults of excess or deficiency in their working of set or innovative development schemes, projects and programmes. Correctives can be built in their mechanisms and processes as provided for in laws in regard to registration of societies and of public trusts. In the final resort, the hand of the State is there to rectify these faults of the voluntary agencies or to nullify their existence. The government has to ensure that the voluntary agencies commanding sizable resources on account of the affluent status of their members do not claim a preponderant share in the development assistance doled out and that the other voluntary agencies also receive their due, may be

more than due, share. As in the case of the governments, public opinion has to be vigilant towards the performance and conduct of the voluntary agencies. Social audit is found to be more effective in this regard as government intervention is often delayed and, in majority of cases, forced by public opinion.

Harold Laski, an eminent British political scientist, defined 'freedom of association' as "a recognised legal right on the part of all persons to combine for the promotion of purposes in which they are interested."¹² Article 19(1)(c) of the Constitution of India confers on the Indian citizens the right "to form associations or unions". This right includes the right to form associations for development. But it has been found that in the country--besides local voluntary associations set up for the development of particular localities--villages/towns/cities, talukas/tehsils, districts, etc., institutions like cooperatives, industrial or trading corporate companies, etc., have undertaken development activities has an accessory or subsidiary function. David Sills distinguishes "spare-time, participatory associations" from those which do not fulfil these two criteria.¹³ He includes in the latter category 'making-a-living' associations like business management concerns, corporations and small industries, trade associations (e.g., cartels), production, marketing and consumer cooperatives, professional associations and labour unions, minority philanthropic associations, like foundations, private schools and universities and (political) lobbies. He also intends to exclude from the category of genuine, spare-time and participatory, voluntary associations like the church and political parties, which share the features of being spare-time and participatory group activities but in fact which possess a kind of compulsive nature, the church being a historical, durable and widespread institution and the political parties being an indivisible part of the governmental phenomenon. We are not concerned here with this categorisation as, except political parties, in India purely voluntary associations of Sills' first category and those of the second category, which might be termed as 'institutions' here, participate in development activities. The rural urban dichotomisation mentioned by Sills¹⁴ is not relevant for our purposes since this article is more concerned with voluntarism in rural development.

A voluntary organisation in development to be of durable use to the community has to nurture a strong desire and impulse for community development among its members, to be economically viable, to possess dedicated and hard-working leadership and to command resources of expertise in the function/s undertaken. It is a tall order. Voluntary organisations do not set out their careers on a premeditated path, only their durable existence proves their being

endowed with the above qualities.

Sills cites in an adapted form¹⁵ the following types of voluntary associations in descending order of membership of the individuals in a community in USA: civic and service; lodges and fraternal; church and religious; social and recreational; veterans, military and patriotic; economic, occupational and professional; cultural, educational and alumni; and political and pressure groups. Except the last type, the other types cited by Sills would have relevance in regard to their participation in development, though the extent of their participation might vary in India.

The voluntary agencies, civic and social, are widely prevalent in the country, explicitly formed for participation in development, or already formed and undertaking development activities supplementary to their original functions. Service voluntary organisations, like the Servants of India Society and the Servants of the People Society, conducting several development activities are umbrella agencies which are becoming rare, on account of the specialities involved in various development activities, the need to come close to the relevant clientele groups and reluctance in independent India of youths to take to lifetime social service at a pittance of honorarium inadequate for a quite decent standard of life. Veterans, i.e., retired or demobilised defence personnel do not engage in developmental activities though they have their own organisations to take care of the problem of their resettlement. Economic, occupational and professional associations have been formed in plenty to advance interests of a large number of new economic activities, occupations and professions that have come into existence after independence. Particularly the industries have been prone to take up as a subsidiary (and pastime, in some cases) voluntary activity developmental work in villages, to siphon off taxable income. Educational associations are numerous, education itself being a developmental activity universal in its geographical and societal coverage. They are constituted to spread education in arts, science and commerce, at primary, secondary, collegiate levels, and also technical education. Alumni groups rarely engage themselves in developmental activities outside financially helping the alma mater.

I have outlined a typology of voluntary organisations in simple terms, applicable to Indian conditions, as follows:

TYPOLOGY OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN INDIAN CONDITIONS

1. (a) Allied with the state; (b) Purely voluntary;
2. (a) Idealistic organisations; (b) Economically-oriented;
(c) Clienteles' own;

3. (a) Urban; and (b) Rural;
4. (a) Women's; and (b) Non-female;
5. Function-wise : (a) Economic, (b) Social; (c) Cultural; (d) Educational; (e) Health and Medical; and (f) Miscellaneous;
6. (a) Local, (b) Regional; and (c) Federal; and
7. (a) Single-function; and (b) Multi-functional.

As functions of the State grow, agencies or organisations, apparently voluntary, are established or come up according to the exigencies of the situation. They can also be termed as "auxiliary voluntary agencies".¹⁶ In India, farmers' unions were formed during the fifties at government's instance to generate interest in the government's Community Development projects, particularly the agricultural development schemes, among the farmers. Parents' associations are a widely prevalent species of voluntary agencies. These groups do not undertake developmental activities as such, but act as correctives in the process of the implementation of the concerned developmental schemes or projects. In the wake of formation of cooperatives in a particular sector, like consumers, sugar, housing, marketing, etc., their federations are set up to facilitate solution of their common problems and to act as their spokesman with the government, other co-operatives' central bodies, etc. In the field of social welfare also, voluntary organisations are established to channelise the voluntary social welfare groups' common problems or to aid the government in tackling the problems of the disadvantaged or disabled persons or groups. Legal aid societies are another example of voluntary organisations allied to the State. Bharat Krishak Samaj and Bharat Sevak Samaj are prominent examples of voluntary organisations sponsored by the State to mobilise respective groups for participation in development activities. The other kind of voluntary organisations in this typology are purely voluntary which do not owe their existence to the State as such, and which depend on themselves initially at least for their activities.

The Arya Samaj, Ramkrishna Math, Sai Service Society, the Servants of India Society, various groups doing voluntary work among the tribals, the Christian Missions engaged in educational and medical work, social service organisations sponsored by the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, leftist groups of various hues, Nanaji Deshmukh, Baba Amte, Manibhai Desai and many others, are idealistic voluntary organisations. The leftist groups/parties should also not feel shy of participating considerably in development activities through own auxiliary organisations. If their social service work does not seek to propagate their own cult among the sections of population served

by them overtly or covertly, such voluntary organisations advance the cause of development. They mobilise funds from followers of their own ideology or cult which are utilised in the cause of development. To that extent, the hard pressed public exchequer is relieved of the financial burden of development. Further, the input of the ideological zeal secures dedicated social work towards development. The economically oriented groups are farmers, labourers, artisans, craftsmen, the bagaitdars (farmers whose farms are irrigated), etc. The clientele groups are varied like the people in need of housing, tribals, the women, the children, the diseased, the disabled, etc. The distinction between the economically oriented and the clientele groups/organisations is not very wide. The former have primarily economic interests which they seek to advance through the mediation of development functions of the State. The latter are needy sections whose needs are diverse--social, health and medicine, and some material or physical surrounding.

The urban and rural voluntary organisations cater to the respective areal populations. But there would be urban based voluntary organisations interested in rural work because their members have migrated from rural areas or nurture intrinsic interest in rural development. Women's voluntary organisations have been formed locally, regionally and nationally. Their number and activities are growing as consciousness among them is accentuating or spreading to larger areas. Non-female voluntary organisations are older, more numerous and have undertaken a larger variety of functions. The women office-bearers or members in non-female organisations are few and far between. The functionwise typology is being well established as the functional needs with regard to development are diversifying with the growing ambit of State's functions and the activities of the State and the non-state institutions and groups becoming more and more complex.

The single-function (like health, education, agricultural, craft) and multi-functional voluntary organisations co-exist due to the varying needs of the people, the exigencies of the spread of government's development functions, the extent of financial availability of the voluntary organisations, and other factors. Voluntary organisations of women in social welfare, of farmers, and cooperatives are established locally, and then federated regionally and/or later nationally. Or the process of organisation may start at the national level branching off at regional and/or local levels. The national organisations also form international federations. This indicates the growing trend of volutarisation in development and increasing specialisation and vocationalisation in it.

With the advent of anti-poverty programmes in the recent phase of planned development in the country, the role of voluntary

organisations in the development process has increased and become more complex.¹⁷ They have to help and check government development agencies in identifying the households below the poverty line and to ensure the delivery of development goods to them avoiding their misuse. The voluntary organisations of the rural labourers have to suggest to the development officials picking up of suitable sites for useful and durable works for their employment. They have to see that the prescribed wage rate is followed in timely payments to them. They must insist on adequate facilities on work sites and at residential/rest camps for women labourers, their children and others. Banks are now new partners in the rural development process. Unlike the development functionaries in government, the bank officials are not used and adapted to the rural development process. Voluntary organisations have to offer help and suggestions to the bank officials in framing lists of eligible households for bank loans and subsidies in the IRDP, the TRYSEM and other programmes. They should ensure that bank assistance is made available to the eligible in time and in adequate size. Similarly, they have to inculcate among the loanees the necessity of proper utilisation of loans and timely repayment to the banks.

The issue of government financial and other kinds of aid to voluntary organisations in development is complex. On the one hand, the independence and autonomy of voluntary organisations would be curtailed with a kind of government supervision accompanying its financial assistance. But the government would stand to gain by assisting the voluntary agencies involved in development. Innovativeness, initiative, matching financial provision, realisation of popular or local needs due to intimate contact with the concerned people or localities, built-in correctives in informal organisation and its modes of operation: these are the assets of the voluntary organisations. The main advantages in voluntarism in development are avoidance of complete bureaucratisation and/or politicisation of the process of development and lessening the danger of concentration of authority and power in the State and its instruments with the impending contingency of eclipse of individual and group freedom. The individual alone cannot survive in the face of the monolithic power and authority of the State but with the support of voluntary organisations he can survive. So, the State, on its own, should offer financial aid even modifying the given rules to the voluntary organisations for development projects and schemes so that their enthusiasm and initiative are not hamstrung.

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Voluntary Organisations in a Plural Society

RAJNI KOTHARI

OURS BEING a fundamentally voluntarist society, based on a wide dispersal of community living and ethnic diversity, there should have been no need to discuss voluntary action at such length as has lately been the case. And, yet, there is a reason for this, a rather specific and historical reason. This is that when we became independent as a nation, we started with a somewhat different model of organising our society. The model with which we started was a model in which the State assumed a primary role in all areas of development. The State was seen as an instrument of liberation from the inhibiting shackles of tradition (so we thought) as well as an instrument of egalitarianism in areas, like the economy, education and even the social structure, all of which were arenas of growing inequality and injustice. There was a full and wide-ranging consensus across the board on this assumption about the role of the State. Not just the ruling party and the government in power but even the radicals, including the Marxists, whose theory told them that the State was the executive committee of the ruling class, believed in the role of the State in India--that the State had to take on a pioneering and regenerating and liberating role. And, except for a very few and strong sceptics, even the Gandhians had accepted this assumption. As a result of this, we built an elaborate structure based on this single assumption that the State was an efficient instrument of reorganising and redirecting the processes of power in what was hitherto a highly voluntaristic society.

ROLE OF THE STATE

Today, we seem to be getting somewhat wiser--after paying some rather heavy costs. There is a growing concern that the State has not been able to function as an instrument of liberation and enfranchisement of the poor and the deprived, of the excluded and the various peripheralised 'minorities'. Actually, the activities,

policies and programmes of the State have given rise to greater disparity and this disparity has been growing in all spheres. All projections indicate the serious limits of the machinery of the government and other instruments of the State to function as purveyors of social change in any basic way. For the basic problem today is that the system, as it has developed, looks more and more to the entrenched elites and the prosperous sections for its support. Even the production system, to which it has given rise, is catering in large part to the needs of the rich.

There was a second major assumption with which we started. Soon after independence, in fact even before independence, at least among the more radical sections of the Congress movement, there was an assumption that we should focus on economic growth as the main engine of development and on centrally planned economic development as the catalyst of social justice. Development was to be carried out by experts, professional experts, whose specialised knowledge was to be the basis of the extension of government into the peripheries, into the grassroots of society and into the wider community. Development had to 'trickle down'. This may, in the beginning, be slow and may even induce inequalities but, in course of time, very soon, there would be a trickle down of benefits. Development was to be, in the vocabulary we were using, for 'target groups', viz., the poor, the rural folk, the backwards. (It is a vocabulary that, still in vogue, including among voluntary organisations known as NGOs.) Development was conceived as something in which people were to be treated as objects rather than subjects.

Today, as we look at the manner in which we have developed, through these instrumentalities, based on these assumptions, what do we discover? We find that increasingly we have misappropriated opportunities for development at our disposal. We did move along the development process through the modalities of the State and through a series of well-thought-out measures--import substitution, greater self-reliance in manufacturing through a great deal of diversion of resources towards the manufacturing sector from the primary sector, and centralised planning for all this. As we 'developed' along these lines, we came to a point when we had no doubt developed a considerable infrastructure of which we had, at that point, reason to be proud of, calling ourselves the sixth or the seventh largest industrial power. But, today, we discover that we gave rise to an infrastructure that basically looked after the consumption needs of the well-to-do, of providing them with life-styles comparable to those in the Western countries.

Infrastructure

As we look carefully, we find that by the time this infrastructure was laid, sometime in the seventies, using the notion of a positive State, new pressures were growing on the government and the ruling elite from the mass of people (who took the idea of a positive State seriously) for moving beyond mere growth and development and providing them with their rightful claims from a democratic polity (which too they had taken seriously). But, by this time, it was the elite that began to have second thoughts about the idea of a positive State, about thinking of the State as the principal instrument of change. Hence, all the talk of 'liberalisation' and 'privatisation', to which I shall presently come. The point right now is that in treating the infrastructural basis of our economy, essentially for meeting the consumption needs of the elite, we developed a production system in which achieving self-reliance in certain sectors--manufacturing 'our own' automobiles to manufacturing 'our own' video--got greater priority than reaching drinking water to the poor. For we never thought that reaching potable water to the people was part of the infrastructure. Instead, we went for an infrastructure that was pitted against meeting the basic needs of the people or an equitable distribution of other necessities. The administration itself, through which the State was to carry out its designated role in social change was so designed as to be pitted against the poor. It was perhaps not a fully worked out and deliberate design, but in practice it did get designed that way.

The Planning Commission has envisaged many schemes. Perhaps no other country has better schemes for the poor, for the agricultural labourers, for the marginal farmers, for the Harijans, for the Adivasis, indeed for all strata of population that are said to be below the poverty line. Schemes have never been wanting in India. The problem is that the allocations made for the schemes under the plans are so skewed and the ruling party, even the opposition parties and all other actors that constitute the power structure as well as the administrative system are so geared that even the allocations that are made are not implemented. Indeed, it can be said now with the benefit of hindsight that non-implementation was part of the design.

Even on issues other than reaching development benefits to the people, like simple maintenance of law and order, one finds an increasing bias against the weak. There is growing oppression whenever the poor raise their voice. Wherever the 'Harijans' have tried to get organised or wherever the tribals have asserted themselves, this has happened. In large parts of rural India, the scale of discrimination and violent subjugation has been escalating in leaps

and bounds. And as for the activists and others working among the poor, most of the time they are engaged in just saving their skin, running between the administration and the people or between the administration and the courts, often on false and fraudulent charges that are deliberately planted. The poor and those who work for them are constantly at the receiving end. The law and order machinery which is supposed to be protecting them is, in fact, engaged in harassing and intimidating them. And in many regions, like Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Orissa, Assam and, of course, the whole of north-east, they are being literally exterminated (not just harassed) through police encounters, occupation armies and the terror of party mafias. The latest and the most ominous of these developments is, of course, the spread of communal hatred and violence and the involvement of the agents of the State in these.

Let us look at another aspect of the nature of the State beyond the role of the administration in providing social justice and civil liberties. It was assumed when we began that political parties, both the different segments of the ruling party (the Congress) and the opposition parties, particularly the parties of the Left, will take up the cause of the poor and see to it that the system, in fact, delivers the results in their favour. Increasingly, in many parts of the country, when one meets the deprived and oppressed groups, the groups affected by 'development', one is told that the parties have no time or concern for them, that they are increasingly getting reduced to electoral machines and legislative manipulations, that there has taken place a striking erosion of their mass base--except in the case of a new independent groups of radical democrats of a wholly new vintage, which are like parties but are not really political parties in the ordinary sense of the term. In other words, the presumed agents of change within the sphere of the State, namely, the major political parties, are found to withdraw from the grassroots process. On the contrary, as a result of the elitist direction that development has taken, they seem to have handed matters over to the machinery of government and of law and order, unmediated by political actors which used to be the case at one time.

Disasters

In the meanwhile, a whole lot of disasters are under way and have gained ground lately. The large bulk of policies of industrial growth that we have pursued have led to a massive erosion of natural resources. We have cut down forests, we have pillaged and plundered whatever natural resources were at one time available to the poor--the plethora of fruits and vegetation, the moisture based plants, the

seeds and roots of a whole variety of protein rich undergrowth. And we have drained these all into the money economy and for export to the cities and to foreign lands. The 'commons' that they had--of land and forests and rivers and pastures for their cattle and the wilds in which their women could go when they had a call of nature--have all but vanished. They have been deprived of their access to water and fuel and the little land that they had has also been taken away for building large dams and high-tech projects. Increasingly, we are displacing masses and masses of the poor in the name of development, forcing them to go into the cities, where the urban elite despises them and they are taken away to the so-called resettlement colonies which are full of filth and disease, and are, in fact, becoming breeding grounds of crime. It is an extremely fearful picture that one sees when one looks at the situation from the vantage point of these sections of our society.

Finally, such a model of development and the capture of the State by a narrow and selfish alliance of interests, aided and abetted by international forces, has also undermined the cultural basis of the whole social order. The nexus that held communities together has been greatly weakened, their traditional life-styles eroded, the individual alienated from a large wealth of affiliations and ties. All of this is giving rise to anomie, petty corruption, competition and envy that is now gripping even the ordinary people, and is leading to increasing violence and intrusion of evil externalities, such as professional goondas. Let me recall here a story that never escapes my mind. We at Lokayan had organised in Delhi a meeting of rural activists working among the farming communities of rural Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh along with a cross-section of the farmers. There was an 80-year-old farmer from Kanjhawala, a place near Delhi, who made a very moving statement in the course of an otherwise 'intellectual-activist' dialogue. He said (it comes out much better in Hindi): Kai log aa gaye, Turki aaye the, suna hai, Greek log bhi aye the, Dilli saltanat wale aaye, Mughal log aaye, British bhi aaye. Itna hum ko pharak nahin pada jitna ke aap ke vikas ke ane se pada. Apka ye Development ne tabah kar diya hum ko. (So many have come to our lands--The Turks came, we hear the Greeks had also come, the Delhi Sultanate people had come, the Moghuls came, the British also came. It did not make such difference to us as has this 'progress' of yours. This Development of yours has destroyed us.) This very telling speech by the old man brought out the destructive and demeaning nature of this thing that we call progress and development.

Centralisation

Now, if only we can look at the situation in which we are from the

view point of these affected people, before coming to the whole question of the role of voluntary organisations, we acquire an understanding of the real state of affairs, whether in the political or in the economic arena or in the cultural arena or simply in respect of human dignity and life. Crucial to understanding this state of affairs is a sharp and steep decline in the voluntary spirit in the arrangement of our affairs, and in the kind of collective ethos and sense of belonging and participation that can get generated through voluntarism, which can never get generated through statism. To have thought that democracy and the building of a just social order could be done merely or largely through the instrumentalities of the State was a serious mistake. It was to have confounded the nation with the State and reduced the people to their so-called representatives which meant the holders of power in the State apparatus. It was an extremely serious lapse in thinking, especially for a nation that had its foundations in voluntarism and local institutions. The result has been that with every move along the new model that we took rather unthinkingly, we not only centralised all initiative, we also undermined the social functions that entities like political parties and their various 'front organisations' had to perform as we reduced democracy and political parties to electoral games. Even spaces that were available at one time, when we moved from the national movement phase into the open political phase of the post-independence period, have also got shrunk and have been shrinking very fast.

As a result of this looking to the State, to the government, to parliament and other central institutions for our freedoms, 'looking up' in this manner, we overlooked the fact that the crux of a democracy consists in its social organisation and social base. As we realise this, it becomes clear that the key to a democratic polity is a basic concept of a social and political infrastructure. Politics needs an infrastructure, as much as the economy does, and without an infrastructure, we will be reduced to what Durkheim called a mechanical solidarity (in place of an organic solidarity). In other words, if a democracy is to function effectively, there has to be a whole lot of organisations--organisations other than merely electoral organisations. Even for the electoral system to become sensitive to the needs of the people, and to be rooted in the social structure, there is need for social formations of a variety of kinds. The citizenry has to be awake. Citizen groups have to be numerous and multifaceted to that the individual belongs to not just one set of organisations ordained by the logic of the State--ruling party or opposition parties--but a whole spectrum of organisations. Even for the limited task of making electoral democracy effective, there is need not merely of what we today, in the new parlance that is

emerging, call 'voluntary agencies', but agencies that are informed by a larger and holistic spirit of social voluntarism (not agencies of some external body). For we need to remember that, believing in Statism and a statist view of development, we have undermined whatever was already there in terms of the voluntaristic base of Indian society as well as the new voluntaristic thrust that had come up during the national movement.

ROLE OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

It is in this overall context of the crisis, in which we find ourselves, that I would like to examine the role of voluntary organisations, of what I personally prefer to call activist and non-party, non-State, groups and organisations. Because I have a feeling that one should not confuse voluntary organisations that aim at participating in the democratic political process from what goes on in the international jargon as 'development NGOs', which are confused with voluntary organisations. It is really non-party, non-State actors that one is talking about.

I am not indulging in semantics when I distinguish between NGO-style development agencies and non-party activist groups. I have no doubt that there are many voluntary organisations of the development kind that have done good work and there is much more scope for this type of work--work that needs to be conceived not as an appendage to a government programme but as an independent role to be played in the development of the country which cannot be played by government institutions. But there is a need to look at the matter rather closely and frankly and candidly.

We have gone through a number of phases which I will quickly go through. I will leave out the pre-Independence efforts at voluntary action, both of the liberal variety and under Gandhiji's impact as these are well known. The first post-Independence phase started with Gandhiji's advice to the Indian National Congress at the time of Independence that the Congress should disband itself, and transform itself into a Lok Sevak Dal. This, of course, was not done. But something did happen at that time. Nehru and other major leaders, backed by large segments of the Congress organisation, went into the government and the organisational wing of the reconstituted party, whereas many others continued to work in the constructive work programmes which were handed over to what we today call voluntary agencies, supported by funds from the government. They, in fact, worked closely with the government and carried out a number of schemes under the broad guidance of the government and the ruling party. There were also some semi-government agencies, like Khadi and Village

Industries Commission, the Handicrafts Board and others that were set up during this period. Many more have come up since then. All of these are still active.

With the realisation of the inequitous nature of the State and the inability of government programmes to benefit the deprived sections, we moved to a second stage sometime in the sixties. It was the realisation that mere implementation of government schemes--or what Planning Commission lays out and voluntary agencies then carry out--as basic instruments of the government or of government-sponsored agencies (though, of course, they were not just instruments and the term was never used) was not enough and could, in fact, be counter-productive. It was felt necessary to conceive of voluntary action as something that is *sui generis* that developed from among the people, performing roles of a different kind than what the government inspired agencies did, following a development model that had, in fact, failed to deliver the goods. It was, in the parlance of the national movement, a shift back to what is known as *rachna* (constructive work) from *vikas* (progress) which is also known as 'development' which was essentially conceived by the government.

Still later, as inequity and injustice grew further and one saw that the State legislation and its principal collaborators were openly and deliberately turning anti-people, a new set of more struggle-oriented groups came along and, today, in the country there are a very large number of these organisations, struggling on behalf of the poor, the landless, the dalits (or 'Harijans'), the Adivasis, the bonded labourers, and many other social strata that were being discriminated against both by State policies and the dominant element in the social structure. So, today, we have a whole spectrum of different kinds of voluntary groups. There are, of course, the large voluntary agencies with their headquarters, their branches and their bureaucracies covering the whole country, who are often in close liaison with ruling groups. Many schemes that are given to these voluntary agencies do not really reach the poor. They seem to suffer from the same handicaps that the ordinary bureaucracy and political parties do. There are others, who came up in the late sixties and early sixties and were set up by people who were already critical of the pattern of growth that we had embarked on, who wanted to directly reach out to the poor, the landless, the dalits, the Adivasis and others. They are the ones who want to try out new technologies to meet the needs of the people and reach the poor. Some of these are directly political, others choose to steer clear of direct political struggles but are still basically committed to the poor and the deprived.

Crucial Distinction

It is these groups that need to be recognised on a different footing than the 'agency' style voluntary groups. In other words, we must make a distinction between the merely construction and development-oriented bureaucratic voluntary agencies and those that are relatively small and working at the grassroots, led by dedicated middle class young men and women who have given up their professional careers and gone for working with the people. The distinction has to be made not necessarily with a view to prefer one or give greater moral sanction to one against the other, but to understand the situation in which the voluntary organisations are increasingly being placed and are being increasingly forced to take cudgels against the State and its agencies.

Gradually, this new breed of voluntary organisations has grown in different sectors. They are operating in a variety of areas, particularly on the periphery of society, and are increasingly taking on new issues and problems as they come up and affect the mass of the people. These also include the problems of ethnic minorities, the problems of religious minorities, of the forest people affected by environmental degradation, of people in the north-east and, lately, of various 'nationalities' asking for regional autonomy. There are others who concentrate on important aspects of bonded labour, child labour, women labour, migrant labour, and the labour of those who are forced to work below the subsistence level, all this being the result of a fast-changing national and international division of labour. Such struggle-oriented work among these sections often take legal forms, asking not only for rights of the people according to the law of the land but also as rights that are being continuously violated. This is particularly the case with the so-called unorganised sector which is growing at a much faster pace than the organised sector. Actually, the organised sector is not growing at all. It has stuck at 3.5 per cent and 4 per cent of the working force for the last 20 years and recent research shows that, in fact, a shrinkage of the organised working force is taking place, thanks to the new technological package of development which is labour-displacing and new 'conditionalities' of IMF and World Bank which clearly look down upon organised working class movements.

It is in this large and sprawling unorganised sector that voluntary organisations have an important role to play because ordinary trade unions are not able to play that role. A lot of Marxists (though not all) do not consider it as relevant to the historic class struggle, the liberals have not much patience for this kind of thing, and I have already indicated how political parties just do not reach there except at the time of elections. Parties, trade unions and

governments do not seem to be bothered about this sprawling sector--the only work that is being done there is by voluntary organisations.

Role of Women

There is a particularly important role that women are playing in this regard, taking up the whole question of alternative development at the grassroots level in a number of areas, e.g., in the struggle against deforestation, in the Chipko movement and many other such movements, or in the coal mining sector in the Chhattisgarh and large tracts of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar and in a variety of places affected by the rise of new technologies and large projects that are directly and openly anti-women. But even where they are not the principal victims, women are playing a major and different kind of role. Organisations led by women are taking a more holistic conception of development and welfare, including that against destruction of nature, against destruction of community life, against drunkenness of men, against unhygienic practices, all combined together as part of a single struggle. There is tremendous scope for this way of looking at things and increasing the role of women as one sees the whole relationship between backwardness and poverty in its true meaning, which the Planning Commission and other development agencies have totally failed to see. Sometime back, in Maharashtra, a six-month-long Yatra had been organised--going from one district to another and appealing mainly to women--by women. It was quite amazing to see the development of awareness that had been brought about by this Yatra of a set of dedicated young women who moved from one district to another--most of them middle class women, themselves getting conscientised and conscientising others. Here is a whole resource base, with people who have time on their hands, who are relatively unemployed, who are looking for opportunities and who are contributing to the growing activism at the grassroots level. It is in this larger sense that I am talking about the role of women, not the work of those highly educated socially-uppish women, who are only talking of women's problems in a rather limited frame, almost along parameters set by their international forebears, most of them only talking and holding seminars and conferences.

Islands of Hope

Now let me return to my main theme--the decline of the State as a liberating force. With the decay in the party system, with corruption and criminalisation of the polity, with all the evidence of decline of institutions and accountability in public life and the massive growth of State repression and deliberate marginalisation of most citizens from the democratic process, the whole world looks like

crumbling. It is the voluntary sector of the struggle-oriented groups and alternative development-oriented groups among the weaker sections that show some signs of hope and strength. We are still not in a position to say that we have come up with a real alternative but there certainly are some signs of hope. These organisations have a lot of weaknesses. They are scattered; they operate only at the micro level; they are not well coordinated among themselves; and they find it often difficult to work with each other. There are ego problems, leadership problems, and in certain parts of the country, serious ideological problems. But they happen to be building the only bridges we have between us and the rural poor.

RETHINKING THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In this context, the original question of development and the role of the State, and the question of role of voluntary organisations in the development process initiated by the State call for a lot of rethinking, away from our original premises that I had outlined in the beginning. If we are to survive as a political democracy and also build ourselves as a democratic society, we really need to do a fantastic amount of rethinking about the very basic assumptions on which we had built a whole array of institutions. Rethinking not just about the nature and role of the State in the political system, the nature and role of State versus non-State organisations in the political process, but also the role of political parties and non-party organisations and the interrelationship between political parties and non-party political organisations. Non-party organisations need not necessarily be non-political; an organisation may be politically oriented and yet not work as a party. We have really, therefore, to examine the whole terrain of the structure of development and not just the model of development. Structures need to be critically looked at as also the institutions through which they operate.

The Structural Issue

This holds the key to the question as to why, despite our wanting to, we have not reached the poor. We all say this, but do we fully ask why is it that we cannot reach the poor? Why is it that our development is increasingly encouraging tendencies which are anti-poor? It is development itself which is encouraging these tendencies by giving rise to and strengthening particular kinds of structures, not some people outside the development process. These structures need to be critically looked at. Only then we can deal with the question as to why we continue to make the same mistakes and why we

have come to the present pass. Why is it that our development is increasingly not only anti-poor but also anti-minorities, increasingly turning against those sections which are not considered to be poor against each other, communalising the whole polity and, in the process, turning our back to the basic issues of poverty and injustice and oppression. Why, in fact, even the pretence of removing poverty is being given up? And even the pretence of socialism is being given up? Socialism, not necessarily as a doctrinal idea but something that has an egalitarian basis. The issue before us, therefore, is not just about the model of development and the assumptions on which it was based, but also the institutional and structural frameworks through which we operate.

It is the question of the organisational model of the State and its impact on development that can provide a lot of material for us to do some basic reconceptualisation of the entire process. This will not come simply by nationalising industries or, on the contrary, by de-nationalising the public sector and by simply going in for liberalisation and a free market and free enterprise oriented system. These are no answers, in my opinion. They provide no keys to removing poverty and inequality in this land of extreme inequity and growing injustices which is now taking the form of open oppression and violence of the State. In fact, the model we are now moving towards, a managerial-technocratic, market-based model, will be more inequitable and oppressive. It does not even suffer from the rhetoric of removal of poverty. Instead, the talk is that the poor are an embarrassment, that if we are to move into the 21st century as a strong and powerful State, it is foolish to get dragged by the problems of the poor and the landless and so on, that there is nothing you can do about them and it is best to think of the poor as dispensable. In the new thinking, the rural areas do not figure, and the poor as such do not figure. When this is pointed out, then, of course, the right kind of noises are made and/or attention is drawn to various plan schemes and, of course, a new wave of populist speeches are made.

Danger of Cooptation

It is these sets of questions that we need to address ourselves, in the specific context of organisational model through which we want to move beyond the earlier model. Assuming that, following the recent political convulsions, the Plan document, for instance, may be once again reviewed to give sufficient thought to reaching the poor and, with that in view, renew the role of the voluntary organisations in Plan implementation. Assuming that this is seriously meant, we have to still ask which voluntary organisations among the many that

exist deserve to be supported and in which way, by what combination of independent and autonomous operation and State-sponsored schemes? The fear is that those with contacts, and clout, those who are close to the bureaucracy and the 'people that matter', and are capable of clever double talk and have, therefore, achieved some political pull, will play this new-found role. The poor-based and the struggle-oriented, alternative development-oriented voluntary groups are in danger of being eased out. One can, of course, work with the government and cooperate with the government if one is sure that the government stands by the poor and the dispossessed, and against the rich and the exploiting sections, certainly not if the former are going to be crushed in the process. Otherwise it will only appear that we are helping the poor but will actually be working for a system that is geared to benefit the rich, including some who are engaged in voluntary organisations. The real danger is that this will give a tremendous legitimacy to the system, particularly the government, which it is in dire need of, without, in fact, solving any of the problems.

What I have in mind is the whole new talk started by the Planning Commission on the involvement of 'NGOs'--it also appointed a Consultant for this purpose--which has led to cooption of a large spectrum of voluntary institutions and of holding out the threat that if you do not join, we are not sure that you will continue to get the grants. It is necessary for us not to get lost once again into the verbiage of planned development, now being talked of as partnership between government and the voluntary sector exactly as it was done in the first phase described earlier by me, but through a new kind of mythology that is being built, and a new jargon that has been unleashed. A large number of upstarts as well as, unfortunately, some old stalwarts of the voluntary sector, who have been taken in by the new mythology (which extends the government's preference for the private sector to include the NGOs), have jumped on this bandwagon and are doing unimaginable harm to genuine voluntary work. The whole field of environment is replete with highly tempting offers from 'power brokers', equipped with money bags to buy over the whole movement against drought, deforestation, desertification and other threats to survival of the poor. The new policies on wasteland development, dairy development, biotechnology and water resources are all aimed at handing over large hinterlands of rural India to the private sector (and in some cases the multinationals) through the new role being assigned to the NGOs. The same is happening in areas of community health, adult education and women's welfare. The only condition being imposed in return for these money bags is that the recipients will keep away from political action or public criticism

of the government. (except in some mild and acceptable ways). And many in the voluntary field are falling in this trap. In fact, I would go as far as to say that in the years to come, particularly following the World Bank prescription on preferring NGOs against government agencies, much more harm to voluntarism may come from some NGOs than directly from the government.

We need to focus clearly and sharply on these new threats. We have to not only distinguish between merely growth-oriented development and genuinely development but also to look closely at the relationships between this variety of actors in all sectors, including the voluntary sector. There is a serious danger to the ends of democracy and the values of voluntarism, if we are to end up depoliticising the voluntary and activist organisations as we are presently being asked to. To politicise them will be a major advance in my view. To this end, the relationship between voluntary groups working among the deprived sections and other organisations in the democratic process like the press, the media, the judiciary and civil liberties groups must be actively encouraged. Without this kind of a framework or a structure of support, mere development-oriented voluntary organisations will not take us very far.

NEED FOR A POLITICAL MODEL

One has to think of the voluntary sector as part of the political system. In his extremely well-documented book, *Grass Without Roots*, L.C. Jain says that the kind of development we have had so far has led to a lot of grass being grown all over the place--grass that has no roots. Moving from grass without roots to grassroots is the fundamental task before those interested in making the development process truly democratic and with roots in society. And this cannot be done except by conceiving both development and the role of development agencies, especially the voluntary organisations, politically. Working with the dispossessed and the oppressed and those struggling on their behalf, and conceiving this task politically, not by shying away from politics. Let me hasten to clarify that while I am for politicisation of both development and other social activities, I do not limit this to party politics. I do not mean the politicisation of the electoral kind. I rather mean the politicisation of the fundamental citizen kind. Politicisation of the kind pursued by the pioneers of the constructive work programme and the broader national development programme that was conceived after Independence in the framework of nation-building. It is from this that we are being asked to move ourselves away. But it is precisely that kind of fundamental politicisation that is the need of the time, both

through consciousness raising, and through building new structures of organisation and creating alternative development institutions in various spheres and at various levels, and through all that generating a political process outside the party framework and in some respects outside the State.

Role of Citizen Politics

The more we think on the whole issue of development and the role of citizens in it, the more we can see that without citizen involvement on a continuous basis, development by itself will become autocratic and will lead to an authoritarian and fascist orientation. Even fascist development is development. Even authoritarian development is development. Development without a conception of citizenship and participation built into it can lead to very frightening consequences. Further, in a highly plural society like ours, without the role of conscious and cultivated citizens in preserving social diversity, what we will get is an extremely hamstrung, monotonous, uniform, and homogenous view imposed from the Centre on the whole spectrum of social organisation and diverse interests and 'roots'. The conception of active citizenship and of the political process as I have laid out will be rich in diversity, protect minorities from being overtaken by a homogenising and chauvinist drive, and make development an instrument of liberties and rights of the poor and the minorities and the diverse populations that inhabit this vast, continental size, complex society. I am talking about politicisation in that sense, not in a narrow party or electoral sense, in the basic sense of development of citizenship and making development an instrument of the idea of citizenship which is so crucial to building a democracy.

To recapitulate what I have been saying, the central issue before us is how to restructure a system and a polity that by virtue of its very *raison d'être* defines a very large number of people out of the political process, out of the organised economy, out of the role and the reach of the State--and hence out of their citizenship rights. If this is our aim, then I suggest that our main hope, in fact the only hope, lies in the new political movements--micro-movements at the grassroots for justice and equity, regional movements for autonomy and decentralisation, and the larger macro-political movements for a truly plural national and international order that is based on various diversities and an array of alternative systems of survival and sustenance instead of being integrated into one large homogenous whole. And this is the role, it seems to me, of the micro-based voluntary groups of a variety of kinds. It is a new breed of politics, a new level, a new space of politics.

New Spaces

People have often misunderstood the conceptualisation of a non-party political process as being anti-party. It is not. The parties will occupy one space, increasingly a narrow space according to me, the space that is essentially given to elections and legislative politics, including the passing of essential legislation. The new social groups and movements, whether these be the peasants movements or the women's movements or the environment movements or the whole new breed of human rights and civil rights movements or the ethnic movements among the minorities--this is a whole new space. It is a different space which is essentially a non-party space. Its role is to deepen the democratic process in response to the State that has not only ditched the poor and the oppressed but has itself turned oppressive and violent. It is to highlight dimensions that were not hitherto considered political and make them part of the political process. Consider what has happened in just the last 10 years. We did not think that health was a political issue. It has now become a political issue, largely because of the work of voluntary organisations. Voluntary agencies have exposed what official health policies have done, what kinds of drugs are poisoning the people, how completely new outbreaks of diseases are taking place. Or take the problems faced by women. They were never considered part of the political process. Through the work of voluntary organisations and groups, even issues that were hitherto considered personal and private are being thought of as political issues and this has really changed the whole nature of the debate on women's issues and made it part of the larger struggle between the weak and the strong. Or take the question of the environment. Until just 10 years ago, it was considered to be a matter to be left to specialists and the government. Whenever a demand arose that something wrong was happening, the government will appoint a committee of experts, and most people were accepting that. But not today. Today the environment movement has made the issue of natural resources and who controls and protects them into an important political issue.

In short, the whole agenda of the political process is getting transformed and this is a major contribution of the non-party, voluntary organisations. The result is that, if one looks at party manifestos since 1977, in 1980, 1984 and recent assembly elections, increasingly one will find some of these concerns being expressed even by party politicians. So, just in respect of defining new areas and new concerns of public life, the role of voluntary organisations cannot be underestimated. It will, thus, be a complete error to think of voluntary organisations and the role and the work of voluntary organisations in a non-political sense. Because their key

contribution lies in making and giving to politics a new orientation, to reconceptualise the political process. To fight shy of it, to think that politics is an undesirable thing, as many in voluntary organisations seem to think, would mean limiting the role, concerns and activities of the voluntary sector.

Voluntarism in a Plural Society

We have to remember that the grassroots issue is very different in a highly plural society like ours. This is not England, this is not Germany, this is not even USA or USSR, if one were to think in terms of size. It is not even China. It is India. Its problematique is very different from those societies. We are not a fundamentally 'secular' society the way secularism and secular authority have been conceived in the West or even in other Oriental societies, like China and Japan. We have for centuries been a highly decentralised and pluralist social order. We have had a polity, an organised polity in the sense of a centralised State, for just about 40 years, unlike China, Japan and others. In this society, social conflicts are not just of either the territorial or of the class type, they are defined in complex, segmented and localised forms and have all along been settled in those diverse and localised settings.

More recently, two other sources of conflict have emerged. One is the rise of communal conflict and the other is conflicts based on what is known as the 'nationalities' issues, based on regional aspirations that are asking for a different kind of federal structure than the one we have. So the nationalities issues, the communal issue and the slowly simmering caste-cum-class issue are all becoming a basis for new social conflicts and very often, as in the case of the poor Punjabi Sikhs, all three converge. Underlying this convergence and despite some traumatic happenings, we need to understand the complexity and the richness of our social terrain and to realise that this is something that the State alone can not just handle. Nor is it possible to resolve these conflicts merely by holding of elections. Elections are necessary but they perform an extremely limited role. To have blown them out of proportion in settling basic social issues has been a mistake. That is why elections are beginning to be increasingly conflict-inducing rather than conflict-resolving. That is why, so often, elections have engendered violence and crime. But if one looks at the other side, from the point of view of the poor and the oppressed and the dispossessed, and what the voluntary organisations in their small ways are trying to do for them, there is far-reaching change taking place all the time in the way problems are perceived.

New thinking is coming to the fore. One thing to remember about

social transformation, even revolution in our age, especially in our kind of society (not just India but many other multi-ethnic and multi-national societies), is that the transformation that is taking place is not something that will happen at some particular moment, like an armed revolution of the kind that took place in Russia or China. Transformation is something that is happening everyday--below our eyes and noses--if we have eyes and noses to see and smell, if we have the sensitivity and the presence to know what these transformations are. Moreover, it is being brought about by the people themselves. Again, it is something that voluntary organisations can help in while the State cannot.

A FEW DILEMMAS

Having raised a number of issues, let me end by raising a few dilemmas facing the voluntary organisations which, in fact, arise from what I have said. When activists go and work among the poor, what should be their approach and perspective? Should they not generate local leadership of the Adivasis, the 'Harijans', and the landless, the forest people and the various minorities, and then leave and withdraw? The dilemma is that if you do that, then the larger system immediately coopts these few leaders that have emerged, say among the Muslims, the 'Harijans' and the tribals, and the rest of the community feels left behind and betrayed, even with the few leaders that they had having 'moved up'. So the catalytic role of the voluntary activists is a continuous process, not just to hang around, but to continue pressing for the rights of the multitudes and not just of the elites among them. This is one dilemma in which one is likely to be misunderstood but, on the other hand, there is no escape therefrom.

The second dilemma is that should the activists basically be a link between the citizens and the State, between citizen groups and the State, or should they also mediate in conflicts between vested interests in society and the poor? This is coming up in a big way in southern states, like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, in Maharashtra, and, of course, in Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, where the landed interests are coming down heavily and in a very violent way on the 'Harijans' and the tribals. This is forcing voluntary organisations, including those of the civil liberties and human rights type, whose main role is to struggle against State oppression, to take positions. There are serious dilemmas here. If they take positions, they are likely to be swamped by parties of one kind or the other. If they do not, they will be failing in their duty. This is again something that needs to be pondered over.

Thirdly, should voluntary organisations working essentially on socio-economic and development issues work closely with organisations working for democratic rights and civil liberties, for moving the courts through public interest litigation, through the press and so on. In other words, should voluntary organisations and civil liberty and democratic rights organisations somehow come on a single platform? Should the political rights of the poor be a concern of the voluntary organisations, and if so, in what way should these be related?

Finally, perhaps the most important of all issues today is that we have a situation in which voluntary organisations are all over the place. These may be fewer in some areas like Rajasthan, Orissa or Madhya Pradesh, at least there are not as many as one would want. But there are a very large number in other areas, like Bihar, Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. But they are not part of a single movement. The important thing to remember about the constructive work programme of Gandhiji was that the people working in that programme were all part of the national movement. And they were available when the next non-cooperation campaign was launched against the British. Even after Independence, for a while, they conceived themselves as part of a movement for social change and nation-building. This is no longer the case.

My own conviction in this regard is that no matter how many voluntary organisations of a micro kind there may be, even if there are twenty or forty thousand such groups working at the same time, they will not make a big difference to the national political situation. Some difference in the local situation they will make but not much difference in the larger national--and international--setting. In fact, the system may thrive better if they are isolated in the micro areas, because they will take care of some of the problems that the system creates. This is necessary as, if the system creates tension between the administration and some affected social strata, the voluntary organisations will try to intervene and correct matters. If the system creates social unrest, again voluntary organisations that are there will help out. So, in fact, as some diehard Marxists would say, we should stop all this voluntary work and let the tensions build up and class and ethnic and regional cleavages sharpen, only then a truly revolutionary situation will take place. In other words, misery should be increased, rather than decreased. I am not taking that stand. What I am saying is that unless we conceive individual voluntary efforts of the various groups as part of a larger macro movement, the change and transformation that may take place will be too micro and too scattered to make any real difference. Sooner or later, there will be frustration and

exhaustion in the ranks, cooptation through clever overtures from the system and, of course, repression which is easy to inflict on fragmented ranks than if these were united and were part of a common macro movement. There is need to restore, in other words, unity of purpose and direction that was there at one time, but which is lost at the moment.

Let me end by saying that the voluntary organisations, to become part of the democratic process, should contribute to it in as large a way as possible. They are already doing this but there is need to do it more systematically. For this, they have to move out of three catches in which they get involved from time to time. They must move out of mere developmentalism, move out of populism of the kind that Indira Gandhi was so adept at and which is still at large among us, and it has to move beyond technologism, towards which we as a nation are now moving. The three, represent three different stages. The Nehru period was essentially developmentalist, the Indira Gandhi period essentially populist and the latest period, following the failure of populist politics, is one of technologism. Voluntary organisations have to transcend all these and move towards a thrust which has two characteristics to it.

Two Basic Tasks

One is that the spaces available to civil society have to grow, which the State has encroached upon. They ought to belong to the civil society: they had always belonged there until recent tendencies took over. Voluntary organisations have to contribute to restoring these spaces to civil society. Secondly, the social thought on which voluntary effort is based has to move out of the paradigm of developmentalism that is inherently both statist and corporatist. This is a severely inhibiting conceptualisation. The new conceptualisation that is emerging--it is already emerging--is around the notion of the rights and liberties of the people, of various sections of the people. Not just political rights in the limited sense of 'human rights' against the State as conceived in the West but rights that obtain from social, ethnic, ecological, gender and ethical main-springs of a diverse and plural society. The much talked of 'paradigm shift' that is likely to take place, both in the social sciences--in order to contribute to a more action-based agenda--and in the field of action itself for the various social movements engaged in this agenda, has to be based in terms of the rights of the people as laid out by me here. It is a comprehensive and sensitive conception of rights. It is rights of the people that are based on rights of diverse communities and ecologies and moral orders that

have been violated and homogenised in the pursuit of development, that has been so State-oriented and that has encroached upon the great voluntaristic tradition of our country and our civilisation.

Voluntary Agencies in Development— Their Role, Policy and Programmes

SANJIT (BUNKER) ROY

INDIA HAS a great tradition in voluntary work. The tragedy is that after three decades of planning, the role of voluntary action is yet to be understood. The world is fast changing, but as far as perception of role of voluntary agencies is concerned, the expectations are limited and, frankly, outdated. While the changing role may be accepted in principle in supplementing government effort, there is still general confusion and lack of understanding as how best to involve them directly in planning and implementing of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes for the poorest of the poor. We must recognise that times have changed and expertise of a different nature is required, strategies radically different in approach and methodology need to be designed, personnel with different attitudes and orientation will need to be mobilised to reach these target groups—economically and socially vulnerable groups like small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, scheduled caste and schedule tribes, bonded labourers, rural artisans and rural women. Socio-economic change of the type and kind we envisage in the planning process and contained in the schemes approved by the government to combat poverty can do without a charity image which is what voluntary agencies will have to live down. If the ultimate goal is self reliance of communities and villages, where the weaker sections live and work, and there is a significant role that voluntary agencies can play then the traditional role and image will have to undergo a great change. The chapter on this subject in the Seventh Plan document is an attempt to initiate this change in image from the social welfare to the development approach.

REVIEW

Little effort was made in any of the Five-Year Plans of the Government of India up to the Sixth Plan to define the role of a voluntary agency. The role was welcomed, encouraged and supported

but there was great hesitancy in making an attempt to bell the cat. The tendency was to equate the work of voluntary agencies with only welfare activities and charity work. In times of disasters, like floods, famines and droughts, or, in short rehabilitation work, there was sympathy and support for the work of voluntary agencies. But in long-term development work, for instance in provision of drinking water programmes, the government called voluntary agencies 'contractors' even though voluntary agencies were prepared to involve the community in decision-making in site selection and doing the same work at a cost which was 30 per cent less than the approved government rates.

Ever since the First Plan, approved in 1952, government had been planning for voluntary agencies. Schemes had been designed by government officials with little or no experience of the problems of voluntary agencies. Small groups working in remote villages found these schemes inflexible and impractical and, as a result, only the bigger groups availed of these funds from government. Thus, setting an unhappy trend. In the Seventh Plan, for the first time, voluntary agencies will be given the freedom to plan their own schemes and follow methodology they think best to tackle poverty in villages they are working in. This will lead to better utilisation of resources and more effective mobilisation of available village manpower.

From the First Plan, voluntary agencies were identified as 'social service' organisations. From this period, the process of 'institutionalising' public cooperation began which culminated in establishment of a National Institute of Public Cooperation. This Institute was ostensibly designed to train and promote voluntary workers and support their activities in the field, maintain liaison with government and generally bring government and voluntary agencies together. By the end of the Sixth Plan (1983-84), the role of this Institute changed beyond recognition and it is no longer performing the role it was supposed to. In August 1952, the National Advisory Committee for Public Cooperation, representing different sections of opinion in the country, was appointed to review and assess the programmes of public cooperation in relation to national development, and advise the Planning Commission from time to time regarding progress of public cooperation in relation to fulfilment of national Plans. By the Third Five-Year Plan, non-governmental organisations, represented on the National Advisory Committee for Public Cooperation, included All India Cooperative Union, All India Women's Conference, Bharat Sadhu Samaj, Bharat Scouts and Guides, Bharat Sevak Samaj, Central Social Welfare Board, Harijan Sevak Sangh, National Cadet Corps, and Red Cross Society. These all-India based organisations still exist: while each perform a vital service in socio-economic development of

the country as a whole, they hardly represent the cross section of voluntary effort in this country. Some of them do not even qualify to call themselves voluntary agencies. Whether most of these have any grassroot base or personnel and expertise to implement anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes of the government, indeed is an open question. In other words, public cooperation, as it gradually got institutionalised, lost credibility in the eyes of the younger groups based in the villages because they felt older organisations had touch with the rural problems of today.

Strategies

The task is so gigantic that it has generally been accepted that government alone cannot tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment and provision of basic minimum needs to people living below the poverty line. There is scope for trying alternatives where peoples' participation has resulted in many village-level groups in the non-governmental sector, both formal and informal, but without getting institutionalised. The growth of institutions has been detrimental to voluntary effort in villages where flexibility is required and where rules and bureaucracy should not destroy the ability to improvise or respond to the felt needs of the poor quickly, effectively and without intermediaries.

The fact that we are talking of voluntary agencies means the strategies they adopt will necessarily have to be considerably different from those followed by government. Like government, voluntary agencies accept the basic objectives of providing food, work and productivity to families living below the poverty line. Like government, voluntary agencies believe in development with social justice and equality and the urgent need to raise the standard of living and the quality of life in the rural areas. From voluntary agencies, government expects generation of an experimentation with new ideas, an attempt to try new approaches and development models within the system. But in order to do this, an environment needs to be created with the least amount of institutional and bureaucratic hurdles.

The policy of government in involving voluntary agencies in the coming Seventh Plan period clearly indicates that the accent will be on professionalising volunteerism. Introduce simple, professional and managerial expertise, in keeping with resources and capabilities of voluntary agencies so that these may be in a position to meet the basic requirements of accountability. In many parts of the country, this shift is noticeable where the existing skills of the rural poor have been upgraded to allow them to tackle situations with greater competence and confidence and ultimately to make them self-reliant.

This involves an entirely different sort of approach from the

conventional charity model of reaching the rural poor with which the voluntary agencies were invariably identified. The social welfare and social service approach does not deal with the longer term issues of self dependence and developing an ability to help themselves. On the contrary, the whole thrust is towards making communities more dependent. The development model adopted by younger village based groups believe in mobilising people and organising the poor, generating awareness and putting pressure on the system from below to make it respond to felt needs. This is one approach which is fraught with dangers and, by far, the most easily misunderstood but this alternative has been tried by any number of small groups with encouraging results.

It boils down to a basic difference in approaches and models. Within government circles, the development of infrastructure is a pre-requisite to rural development: to the voluntary agencies this is of secondary importance. Development of human beings, and making them aware of their rights and duties, of schemes and programmes and of rules and regulations have been considered more crucial. The government has recognised this role in the Seventh Plan document which is a radical improvement on the stand taken by the government in the previous Six Five-Year Plans. The government has taken over three decades to legitimise this role of voluntary agencies regarding facilitating the process of making people aware of alternatives--other than the monopolistic delivery system of the government--that are legal, democratic and non-violent with a view to bringing about socio-economic change.

The underlying message that voluntary agencies are emphasising repeatedly and which has been recognised right from the First Plan (1952) to the Sixth Plan is that the communication and credibility gap between the planner and the implementer (between theory and action) must be reduced. The demystification of the planning process, where the implementer is also a party to the design, is long overdue.

The strategy to involve voluntary agencies presumes the presence of a healthy atmosphere and good will between government and voluntary agencies. In spite of the policy statements, regrettably, the current relationship is far from happy. Instead, we find mutual suspicion and lack of trust in each other. There is general acceptance and sympathy at the higher echelons of government, but there is open hostility especially towards non-institutional and smaller groups at the village level for reasons only too well known. Lack of an established forum, where voluntary agencies could be given an opportunity to explain their position, is now tilted against the interest of voluntary groups. The need to establish a regular forum

was felt almost at the end of the Sixth Plan period when the late Prime Minister, in October 1982, wrote as follows to all the Chief Ministers that Consultative Groups of voluntary agencies must be established:

Widening the role of voluntary agencies in the implementation of the scheme under the 20-point programmes has been established a number of times. The State Governments should consider setting up a Consultative Group under a Senior Officer like the Development Commissioner or the Chief Secretary. These groups should have as its members representatives of voluntary agencies which are already working for rural development and have an actual presence in a village. Periodic meetings of such groups will give valuable feedback on the implementation of these schemes to the government and will help sort out problems affecting the work of voluntary agencies.

Unfortunately, very few such Consultative Groups have been formed and those that have do not meet regularly because the culture of accepting voluntary agencies as an alternative to the government strategy of reaching the poor and how they can be assisted has not been understood by the rank and file. But the process has begun, the first step has been taken and that is important.

ROLE

The role of social service institutions will obviously differ from the development-oriented organisations. The role these village based development group envisage for themselves are as follows:

1. **To Supplement Government Efforts and not to Compete:** The effort is to offer to the rural poor choices and alternatives. Where possible, initiatives have given rise to voluntary agencies, there is room and space for both to work. A government that promotes the private and the public sector in industry cannot only opt for a monopolistic system in rural development. Consider the voluntary agencies as the private sector (without the profit motive) in the village. It should not be looked upon as duplication.
2. **To be the Eyes and Ears of the People at the Village Level:** There is need for an independent agency to act as a reliable feedback so that government policies and programmes could be designed taking real community problems into account.
3. **To Set an Example:** It should be possible for the voluntary

agency, with limited resources, to reach a larger number with less overheads and with greater community involvement. Any number of examples are readily available from all over the country that the Government can replicate on a larger scale. Kerala Gandhi Smarak Nidhi on intensive paddy cultivation by engaging 'barefoot technicians' which the State Government adopted in the Fourth Plan period; Comprehensive Rural Health Programme in Jamkhed (Maharashtra) using illiterate and semi-literate women for preventive health programme; SEWA (Gujarat and other States) mobilising and organising slum and pavement based female entrepreneurs in the so-called unorganised sector; ASAG [Ahmedabad Study Action Group (Gujarat)] with several low cost housing designs in Ahmedabad; SWRC (Rajasthan) with the community based maintenance system of hand pumps as against the expensive top heavy 3-tier system pushed by UNICEF; AFPRO (Delhi and in 10 States) in the promotion of low cost bio-gas technology; Eklavya (Madhya Pradesh) in training teacher in science education through government schools; and MYRADA (Karnataka) in wasteland development in their own way are all setting an example. They all offer practice-oriented proposals and have policy implication when it comes to replication.

4. **To Activise the System and Make it Respond:** There are Acts of the Government, like the Minimum Wages Act, Abolition of Bonded Labour Act, and Protection of Civil Rights Act, which are either not being observed or effectively enforced. Voluntary agencies must take up such tasks as have been started in recent years through public interest litigation and other administrative measures.
5. **To Disseminate Information:** Very often, schemes, programmes and projects of the government, with its many policy changes, orders and circulars do not percolate fast enough to the village level. More often, the interpretations of these schemes are left to the mercy of the lower government functionaries not entirely sympathetic to the problems of the rural poor. Information is power and the role of voluntary agencies is to distribute such power and make it accessible through as many channels as possible so that the rural poor can decide for themselves what they want to do with it or which scheme they would like to use.
6. **To Illustrate How Local, Village and Indigenous Resources would be used for their Own Development:** Human resources, rural skills and local knowledge are grossly underutilised in the villages by government and it is for voluntary agency to

show what is possible. The demystification of processes of technologies of knowledge and skills and the recognition they deserve is long overdue. While the credibility of ideas has already been proved in the voluntary sector, it is time to get it accepted in the government circles.

7. **To Make Communities as Self-reliant as Possible:** Unfortunately, the development and delivery system as it exists today is designed to make communities more dependent than independent. The system of accountability within government is so severe and inflexible that subsidies, loans, inputs, services and support mechanisms, ostensibly designed to serve families living below the poverty line actually, tend to ensnare them rather than allowing greater freedom for their work.
8. **To Train a Cadre of Grassroot Workers, Who Believe in Professionalising Voluntarism:** The technology base that we think exists at the village level is virtually non-existent in practice. The demands of the community as well as the high expectations, have made it necessary to bring professional expertise to the poor without intermediaries.
9. **To Mobilise Financial Resources from Within the Community:** If the ultimate idea is to make communities stand on their feet, if the idea is to promote self-reliance, if it is to generate awareness and develop human beings, then much depends on how much value we give to self respect and dignity. Any thing given free is not appreciated.
10. **To Mobilise and Organise the Poor to Demand Quality Service and Impose a Community System of Accountability on the Performance of Grassroot Government Functionaries**

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION

Till the Sixth Plan period, no attempt was made to draw up terms of reference on how to identify rural voluntary agencies. Currently, a debate is on in India among all voluntary groups whether we should have this classification at all. The question about urban based support groups assisting voluntary agencies in rural development work is also raised in this regard.

In the context of voluntary groups involved in a nationwide discussion on a draft code of conduct and a Bill for the proposed National Council, can such groups based in urban areas receive funds for rural development and would the code of conduct apply to them as well? This attempt at focusing on greater clarity on the classification of voluntary agencies has met with opposition from the urban based groups. There are voluntary agencies and many of them,

in spite of calling themselves social welfare agencies, do not really qualify to call themselves voluntary organisations. The fact that it is in the non-governmental sector, does not necessarily mean it is voluntary in nature or spirit. It may fall in the loose category of 'Public Cooperation', but so do cooperatives and trade unions and panchayati raj institutions, but they can not be classified as voluntary agencies. The Seventh Plan document approved by the National Development Council, the highest decision-making body in the country, contains the following criteria for identifying rural voluntary agencies:

1. The organisation should have a legal entity.
2. It should be based in a rural area, and be working there for a minimum of three years.
3. It should have broad-based objectives serving the social and economic needs of the community as a whole, and mainly the weaker sections. It must not work for profits but on a no-profit on-loss basis.
4. Its activities should be open to all citizens of India, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, sex or race.
5. It should have the necessary flexibility, professional competence and organisational skills to implement programmes.
6. Its office bearers should not be elected members of any political party.
7. It declares that it will adopt constitutional and non-violent means for rural development purposes.
8. It is committed to secular and democratic concepts and methods of functioning.

The reason why voluntary agencies have acquired such a dubious name in some circles is because we have not been able to divorce it from party considerations of profit, for office and power. Where voluntary agencies have not been able to keep their identity and non-aligned character, the spirit of volunteerism has suffered.

PROGRAMMES

It is significant that the chapter on involvement of voluntary agencies in the Seventh Plan has been included in the main chapter (Chapter II: Vol. II, pages 68-70) on Rural Development. This was not a coincidence. It was done deliberately because government wanted to shift the focus of the traditional image of voluntary agencies (welfare, relief and rehabilitation, social services, working with the handicapped) to the non-traditional, professional,

managerial and a technological image of rural development where voluntary agencies also have a substantial contribution to make. This is not to say that the traditional role played in the welfare, education and medical sector was not important or necessary. But by identifying the programmes in the rural development sector as well, government has recognised the need to mobilise small village groups. This would mean a change in attitude in the system itself, lessen bureaucratic hurdles and get state governments to support such activities. The programmes these village groups will be involved in the Seventh Plan period are:

1. Integrated Rural Development/Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme/TRYSEM;
2. Implementation of land ceilings and distribution of surplus land;
3. Enforcement of minimum wages to agricultural labourers;
4. Identification and rehabilitation of bonded labourers;
5. Supply of safe drinking water: repair and maintenance of water supply system with community support;
6. Afforestation, social forestry, development of bio-gas and alternative energy sources (solar, wind energy, smokeless chulas, etc.);
7. Promotion of family planning;
8. Primary health care; control of leprosy, TB, blindness; and preventive health programmes using village resources;
9. Programmes for women and children in rural area;
10. Innovative methods and low cost alternatives in elementary primary and middle school education for children, adult education and non-formal and informal education;
11. Consumer protection, promotion of cooperatives;
12. Promotion of handicrafts and village and cottage industries;
13. Promotion of Science and Technology;
14. Legal education;
15. Rural Housing--improvement of rural slums;
16. Environmental ecological improvement; and
17. Promotion and encouragement of traditional media for dissemination of information.

For the first time, in the history of the planning process in India, government has made a firm commitment to channel Rs. 150 crore through voluntary agencies for anti-poverty and minimum Needs Programmes. The process has started of earmaking specific amounts in the budgets of various ministries to be spent exclusively through village level voluntary organisations. Nearly 15 different

ministries are involved in the exercise.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The second last paragraphs of the Chapter in Seventh Plan reads as follows:

There is a need for voluntary agencies to decide on a code of conduct to be applicable to those agencies receiving government funds.

In 1985, 13 voluntary agencies from various backgrounds--Christian, Gandhian, Sarvodaya, Ramakrishna Mission, Social Service and activist groups--got together and drafted a code of conduct for open discussion and national debate. The proposal has policy considerations dealing with discipline, control and accountability among ourselves. This has started a hectic debate all over the country, and over 50 meetings, largely held in metropolitan cities so far, may be opposed to the code. The idea is to get the voluntary sector to come to some sort of consensus after a free and open discussion on how we should discipline ourselves and in what manner we should be accountable to each other. This will show how different we are from government and also cut colossal voluntary agencies to size who have ceased to classify as voluntary agencies and who are really following no code worth the name. There are elements in the draft code that could affect the working of larger, affluent, urban based organisations that claim to work for the rural poor sitting in cities like declaring one's personal assets, living a simple life style, limiting the salary up to an upper limit of Rs. 18,000 per year (the amount exempt from income tax). The smaller organisation are already following a strict code among themselves by choice and habit, so it does not really affect them.

It is when organisations become institutions, when structures yield to hierarchies that discipline and accountability suffer and by then the voluntary agency is out of control.

It is the urban-based groups that are up in arms against the code and the proposed National Council primarily because they see it as government control over the voluntary sector which, it seems to me, is not the real reason. Actually, the code will expose their personnels' lifestyle and that is likely to lead to embarrassing details which they would rather keep hidden. But this bogey about government control they did not raise when government did take steps to control voluntary agencies--like when the Foreign Contribution Act was introduced regulating foreign funds to voluntary agencies. At

that time, these very agencies did not object or even raise their voice against it. In fact, they quietly applied to the Ministry of Home Affairs and got themselves a number.

The draft code of conduct is presently being translated into regional languages and small groups are meeting to discuss it in order to come to a consensus. There are indications that these village groups are all for it and for the first time these groups have started coming out in the open questioning bigger and more affluent groups on the sensitive issues related to the draft code and National Council.

Voluntary Associations : A Strategy in Development

V.G. NANDEDKAR

DEVELOPMENT IS a recurring theme in the vocabulary of the Third World countries. Its leaders have used every platform, national legislature, executive decision-making, popular addresses and international meetings to articulate their concept of development. Modern governments, more so, governments of the Third World countries, live and grow in development. While consolidating the newly won freedom, the Third World countries are faced with the basic problem of nation-building and translating political freedom into economic and social freedom. In the freedom struggle, they have collectively experienced the degenerating effects of exploitative imperialism and destruction of home economies. During the struggle, the national elites, therefore, cherished to establish that type of free society--Western liberal or radical--which would be free from exploitation--political, economic and social. It is this concern of a comprehensive change that gives a context, an elevated context, to the process of development.

DEVELOPMENT: THE MAIN THEME

Development, thus, is not mere modernisation. But it is basically intended to bring in a desired change in various sectors of social life, extending its effects to larger social areas, and at the same time taking roots in the national soil so as to make the whole process of change indigenous and legitimised. Political elites of developing countries accordingly attempted various socio-political mechanisms, congruent to their national patterns to administer this change in its larger context, Nehru's democratic socialism, therefore, becomes more homespun, making individual human being as the core concern of developmental activities.

When development articulates and actualises the proclaimed goals of national movement, of industrialisation, modernisation of agriculture, revival of local craft, increasing literary level,

extending medicare and arousing popular knowledge and interest in community effects of change, it affects their pattern of living and, in addition, their pattern of thinking.

Politically, it introduces structural differentiation and a drive for developing their capabilities. Administratively, it calls for a functional specialisation and need for professional efficiency. Economically, it directs its efforts for an increase in the gross net product and aims at improvement in standard of living. Socially, it encourages secondary structures and strives to vitalise these structures through social mobilisation.

With the exception of Latin American countries, the Third World countries have received legacies from their colonial masters in the form of institutions, institutional practices and institutional thinking. Development in the Third World, accordingly, assumes politically a correspondence with Western democracy. It also assumes that underdevelopment is the effect of underdeveloped structures (and not vice versa). The structures, therefore, need to be modelled on Western prototypes. On the administrative side, it is felt that an identity between bureaucracy and rationality and transfer of technology through foreign aid would smoothen the process of administering change. Economic aspect of the process presumes that economic modernisation would lead to economic growth and, in a chain effect, to political and social development.

The Western model of 'recovery and reconstruction' (The Marshall Aid) meant, "economic growth by diffusion of western capital, Western technology and western institutions". State interventionism was also accepted by the western capitalist world by 1930 (The New Deal). The leaders of the Third World found no conceptual difficulty and hesitation in adopting this line of thinking. The role of the United Nations and its agencies cooperating in developmental efforts of the Third World, collaborations with industrial/commercial concerns in developed countries for extending their activities in the Third World, academic programmes of research--all strengthened this line of thinking.

But development is less an economic and more a political and much more a social phenomenon. It is not development but development with social justice that is the main concern of the Third World countries. They have expressed doubts about the value-free position of development and charge it with a tacit leaning towards Western liberal value-cluster. They have no faith in "the trickle down effect" of development. And some have rejected Western type of democracy as the ideal structural arrangement for realising development.

Participative association of people in the process of development

is strengthened by the social context of development. Mahatma Gandhi wanted a people-centred process of development with mobilisation and organisation of community forces. Naturalness of social functional groups becomes here an index of development. His concept of development projects consumerism and commercialism as economic guidelines for development and accepts Sarvodaya as a guiding principle. Political structure, for him, needs to be diffused in "seven hundred thousand villages". As Jayaprakash Narayan has stated, organisation of small self-governing communities is the only means of assuring that *rajneeti* is the expression of *lokneeti*.¹

Thus, faced with the problem of extending development in its larger economic-political-social sense and strengthening democracy, in a liberal or radical sense, the governments of the Third World countries tried various socio-political models for smooth administration of development. The aim was to mobilise people and make them aware of the process of change, to politicise the machinery and make it responsive to the needs of the community--both ultimately socialising the apparatus and securing the desired change.

NEGATIVE ORIENTATION OF THE APPARATUS

The traditional governmental organisation was found inadequate to deal with the situation. Trained in regulatory functions, the task of development was totally new to its procedures and practices. Development is less an administrative task than an extension function. It is more a matter of conviction about the goal and an expression of unreserved cooperation, than a detached mechanical exercise of chained activities. By his social background, education and training, a bureaucrat found it difficult to identify himself with this process of development through mass involvement. As a professional, paid and permanent job-worker, he lacked commitment to the goal and involvement in its realisation in spirit.

The ethos of neutrality and anonymity also would come in the way in inculcating developmental orientation in this apparatus. Development is a process of discretion and diffraction. It involves a built-in bias in selection of schemes, and in detailing of programmes explained and justified within the frame of the holding values of people in power. As such, it is political. Its success is gauged to the extent it increases the levels of diffraction. In this process, the role of a bureaucrat undergoes a change. He is not expected to be a mere agent of change, at minimum a catalyst and at full an actor in the process. His neutrality and anonymity would deter him from performing this role. He will not be able to keep pace with the rapidly changing socio-economic situation, nor will he

be able to get a feel of popular aspiration. When a State is being progressively involved in introducing a change, affecting scope and content of welfare, impersonal and neutral attitude of government bureaucracy would be looked upon as a grave matter of concern. Peter Self, in *Administrative Theories and Politics*, deals with four types of interaction between the two: (a) policy making, (b) arbitration of interest, (c) treatment of individual, and (d) balancing political and accountability and administrative discretion. In Britain, the division between the two groups is much clear. In France, the political and administrative division favours career bureaucracy. In India, the division is fluid and confusing. In such a situation, when leadership becomes politically weak, bureaucracy becomes either inept and indifferent or arrogant and biased, there is little to choose between these alternatives.

Historically, there is an anti-bureaucratic attitude affecting its relation with citizen at large. Bureaucracy was the visible arm of the British rule and was mainly used for collection of revenue, maintenance of minimum services in the imperial interest, and suppression of popular movements. It showed little concern for people and little interest in realising their welfare.

Such a bureaucracy, carrying "too much baggage of the past" (Taylor Ensminger) was naturally found inadequate to carry development, and to secure the process of change.

Experiments in community development culminating in the Community Development Programme (CDP) in 1952, establishment of Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in 1953, and introduction of Panchayati Raj in 1957 showed the direction towards the desired change in administration. The CDP aimed at establishing an identify between the 'felt-needs' and the 'real needs' of the community. The CSWB engaged itself in designing new welfare programmes and Panchayati Raj institutions and came out with a blue-print of socio-political mechanism to administer development and make the process enduring. Common realisation was the need for popular involvement in the process of development, and a wider partnership between community groups, departments of the government and political institutions of the country.

NEED FOR VOLUNTARY ACTION

Organised forms of popular participation make development stable. Further, this participation inculcates a feeling of community belonging and thereby vitalises the whole process. This was the essence of CDP--a programme for total transformation: economic development social change and democratic growth based on participation

and social equality. This approach paid handsome dividends and its functional success justified its extension first to the conceptual foundation of Panchayati Raj and then to urban development projects. Where popular participation is unfailingly present and expanding government/community organisation at the local level covers a wide range of activities, not only strengthening development but strengthening its roots. The Rural Urban Relationship Committee (RURC) also emphasised the role of urban community development projects (UCD) and, in appendix IV of its report, it has dealt with the administrative apparatus of the project, contents of its programmes, staffing and organisational problems.²

When government functions are increasing in breadth and depth, popular participation becomes inevitable and the rise of popular associations natural. The Planning Commission, therefore, stated that, "properly organised voluntary efforts may go a long way towards augmenting the facilities available to the community for helping the weakest and the most needy to a somewhat better life. The wherewithal for this has to come from the time, energy and other sources of millions of people for whom voluntary organisations can find constructive channels suited through varying conditions in the country".³

Participation of voluntary associations in the process of decision-making and decision-implementing is necessary and obvious too. As a strategy, this partnership would help linking social action with State action. Organisational decision is concerned with distributive benefits, i.e., political in nature. It is a product of interaction between 'interests affected' and 'interests involved'. Administrator's concern with 'rationality', and organisation's concern with 'responsiveness' join consumer's concern with 'favourableness'. A decision then is made and remade so that it is better understood, better executed and better responded to. The RURC, like the Planning Commission emphasised developmental partnership between governmental institutions and voluntary associations. "So many and so varied are the interests, needs and aspirations of (Urban) people, that the only way in which this potential force can be made effective is through corporate action, organised and directed by the people themselves and reinforced by all technical and administrative advice and services required by a particular situation."⁴

Approach paper on the Seventh Plan (1983-90) looks at voluntary organisations as "the eyes and ears of the beneficiaries", the weaker sections of the society, who have been left out of the mainstream of development benefits. As a strategy, voluntary associations would be associated more closely and critically to ensure that target groups

receive development benefits meant for them, augment such programmes and, at the same time, use these associations as an alternative feedback mechanism.

Leaving its traditional field of social welfare, the Approach Paper opens new vista for voluntary action in forestry, agricultural research and education, rural development, anti-poverty programmes, water supply and sanitation, medicare, development programme for women, development of weaker sections of society, science and technology, environment and ecology. Thus, the involvement of voluntary associations is becoming deep and extensive and now covering larger social issues.

The CBSW while concerned with opening fresh fields for welfare programmes, was equally concerned with the task of promoting new voluntary organisations and making them financially viable through the system of grants-in-aid. Within a period of 10 years, the Board achieved success and name and the number of voluntary organisations practically doubled by 1963, raising it from 3,000 to 6,000. A host of constructive workers were already in the field, either taking inspiration from the freedom movement or drawing upon the Western liberal thinking of the rulers and working for social uplift, in general, and for the lot of rural people, in particular.

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS ON A DEVELOPMENTAL AXIS

Development is a complex process. Not confining itself to the physical indicators of 'brick and mortar' it covers socio-cultural dimensions. Extending services to the needy still remains the basic drive. But, in the developmental context, this becomes inadequate to keep the on-going process of development. The older idea of charity, the older thrust of philanthropic spirit and the older content of social welfare have to an extent become little relevant in modern participatory democracies. Voluntary activities, therefore, need to be performed in an institutional way, need to be coupled with professional skills, and need to be based on a modern conceptual foundation.

The variety of voluntary associations can be placed on a developmental axis, considering methods of development, contents of programmes and basic objective. Guiding developmental processes. On the lowest scale would come 'duty' bound individual activity supported by a religious frame and on the highest would come citizens group activities supported by a secular frame. The ascending order could be detailed as follows:

1. Individual Practice of 'Dharma'--This covers individual's

services to the needy. The contents of service are an expression of the concept of 'dharma' and the service is more oriented to the individual 'giver' than to the needy 'receiver'. It lacks institutionalisation and rests on the individual's interpretation of dharma.

2. **Religious Institutions**--This category covers temples/churches or similar institutions engaged in activities--developmental in nature. These are more 'humanitarian' in nature and the spirit behind the activities is that of 'amelioration' of social conditions than that of 'development' of social process. Individuals or kings/landlords in a feudal system would place welfare activities on a permanent footing. "The social conscience of the individual citizen and the concern of the community as a whole for the deprived and needy sections of the population expressed itself primarily through religious channel".⁵ The math/vihar system in ancient India represents this type of association. In modern India, activities of institutions, like Ramakrishna Mission, Pinjrapol, Sadavarta, would represent the continuity of this line of thinking and action.
3. **Individual-based Philanthropic Activities**--These cover a vital sector of social and cultural life. The base and support is not religious but social service at large. It lacks institutionalisation and, therefore continuity, unless the activity develops into a movement, e.g., Friends of Trees.
4. **Social Service and Cultural Associations**--Like the earlier associations, these are also 'non-political' in nature and work through the socio-cultural ethos of the system. These associations find areas of cooperation among social groups, try to satisfy secondary needs of the society and help to make life 'happy and contented' (Aristotle). In realising this, they complement the developmental efforts and make development comprehensive. Unlike individual-based activities, these are institutionalised efforts, so endure longer, e.g., Rotary/Lions clubs.
5. **Professional and Consultancy Associations**--These associations emphasise the process aspect, the technical component in activities and programmes and extend advice/guidance/help in their specialised fields. While performing these functions, the associations try to regulate the activities of their member units and set and uphold norms of professional behaviour. The associations also act as a common forum for their clients for discussing problems of the profession and also function as interest groups, e.g., Medical Council, Chamber of Commerce,

Bar Council.

6. **Functional Associations**--These express in unambiguous terms the interests of their members and endeavour to protect the same. Unlike socio-cultural professional associations, these associations add to development process, do not inhibit confrontation with administration and government and are agitational in spirit. The associations function as pressure groups and need not have political affiliation, e.g., taxpayers association. Associations like trade unions may have expressed political leanings.
7. **Front-line Associations**--These associations cater to the problems of their clients but have clear political orientations. Political parties look to these associations as recruitment grounds, e.g., Kisan Sabha, Khedut Samaj.
8. **Action Groups**--These groups are involved in mobilisation and socialisation of unorganised sections of society. These encourage group-action against exploitation and oppression. These associations generally have a political radical tilt. But, at times, these may take anti-political stance.
9. **Protest Groups**--These groups are like action-groups, with or without political affiliation. But the evils they protest against are more at social level than at sectoral level, e.g., investigative journalism, and legal aid cell.
10. **Citizens' Groups**--These associations develop secular interests with community-life and encourage interaction with administration. These work more with the spirit of cooperation than confrontation, e.g., Grahak Panchayat, Consumers Education Centre, and Citizens Council. International non-governmental organisations (INGOs), like UNICEF, CARE, etc., help these associations to extend their coverage and effectiveness.

These associations, through their dialogue with administration, develop interest, understanding and cooperation between citizens and their community government and help to achieve optimistic negotiations, workable compromises, and responsive administrative processes.

SOCIAL WELFARE AND WEAKER SECTIONS

Welfare State is very much involved in its people, working positively in maintaining good life and equally working to raise the standard of those who are below it. Such a state is committed to a continuous improvement of social services in regard to their scope, adequacy and quality. With a well-meaning enthusiasm, this State may initiate a host of social services and keep lead in providing these.

More public administration may lead to more bureaucracy, more impersonalisation of services and make recipient citizen a disinterested onlooker or a helpless spectator. "What makes the welfare state such a pleasant society is the stress on good life... there is a growing amount of gardening in daily life". It is this gardening, focusing on personal things in one's surrounding, the things in which one finds one's self and its development, that will help citizen to take interest and involvement in the things that are happening around and affecting his 'gardening'. A Welfare State need not be an absorbing State, centralising power in the hands of the government, public sector undertakings or even big commercial cartels. Citizens' participation on a larger scale in the form of voluntary association can effectively check this tendency. It will not only save its right to decide things affecting its very existence but it will also save the otherwise Welfare State losing its *raison d'être*. Welfare does not reside in what government produces and distributes but how it produces and puts its production in the distributive net. Gunnar Myrdal lays stress on "relevance of the utopian, decentralised and democratic state, where within the bounds of even more effective overall policies laid down for the whole national community, the citizens themselves carry more and more of the responsibility for organising their work and life by means of local and sectional cooperation and bargaining with only the necessary minimum of direct state interference".⁶

In developing countries, where state machinery is the main organised force, this danger is more pronounced and government, while attempting to reduce social and economic inequalities through its target-group oriented programmes, may in effect, without express intention, add and aggravate these inequalities. Realisation of welfare of the weaker sections of the society has been trapped in this situation.

Various strategies have been adopted to initiate the process of transformation of rural and socially weaker communities and put them into the mainstream of development--development with social justice--and reach the idealised Welfare State. According to W.A. Robson, "The existence of a sense of fellowship and public spirit throughout the society is a basic need of the welfare state".

To fight out poverty, various ways have been employed. Looking at development as a technology-starved process, emphasis on introducing new technology and thereby increasing output has been adopted. Propagation of High Yielding variety and Green Revolution approach indicates this line of thinking. Instituting specialised agencies indicates another approach. Small Farmers Development Agency, Rural Workers Welfare Board are examples of this line of thinking. At the

legislative level, certain structural changes are introduced to facilitate development with justice. Land Ceiling Act is an example of this line of thinking. Variety of schemes and programmes are grouped together as these individually and collectively benefit economically and socially backward classes. Schemes implemented under 20-Point Economic Programme or Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP) or Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) are examples of this exercise. Authorities like Command Area Development are a class by themselves--introducing wide-range changes in agricultural practices and water management. States have their own pattern of schemes for realising welfare of economically and socially weaker sections, like the Food For Work Scheme (FFW) of Maharashtra or the Antodaya scheme of Rajasthan. Tribal Area Sub-Plans have become an integral part of state-planning process since 1976-77.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan (Draft) 1980-1985 of the Government of Gujarat states, "Reduction of the disparities in the levels of development between different areas and different sections of the society is an important objective of planning....Equally important is the provision of welfare schemes meant to cater to the backward classes and vulnerable sections of the society, such as the small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers and rural artisans, etc."⁷

The Tribal Sub-Plan outlay for Gujarat (1980-85) provided an outlay of Rs. 459.65 crore (i.e., 14 per cent of the State's plan outlay). This was to be supplemented by special Central assistance as well as other programmes of Central ministries and institutional finance. The sectoral break-up would be:

Sl. No.	Major Heads of Development	Flow from State Plan (Rs. in crore)
1.	Agriculture and Allied Programmes, including Community Development, Panchayats and Special Programmes	129.74
2.	Cooperation	8.57
3.	Water Development	91.28
4.	Power	35.21
5.	Industries	25.53
6.	Transport and Communication	60.11
7.	Social and Community Services	108.21
8.	Economic Services	1.00
Total		459.65

Voluntary associations complement the programmes and activities initiated or indicated by the State's lead. These on their own also initiate development programmes and thus become a crucial force of development. For example, Pandu Mevas Development Agency (Savli, District Vadodara, Gujarat), sponsored by Sir Sayajirao Diamond Jubilee and Memorial Trust, aims at integrated rural development and has covered a group of 25 villages in the most backward area of Savli taluka of the district. As a project activity, it helped reclamation of 200 acres of Kotar and 75 acres of ravine land. It obtained during the project period (1978-1985) dilapidated wells from the government, and repaired and supplied equipment for well irrigation. It also undertook the programme of deepening of private wells. The Agency had a sustained extension programme and had arranged 245 demonstration plots in the area. It was at the instance of the Agency that the District Panchayat built 6 check-dams in the project area. The indicators of success of the work done by Pandu Mevas Development Agency can be seen in the advance of Rs. 20 lakh by the Bank of Baroda against crop, introduction of new crops, like groundnut and variali, increased number of tractors (from 1 to 11) for farm work, people's receptiveness to scientific efforts in Animal Husbandry, and larger registration for vocational training. The Vedchhi Intensive Area Scheme (VIAS) at Vedchhi, Valod taluka District Surat in Gujarat, a similar voluntary group initiated integrated development programme inspired by the Gandhian philosophy. It conducts three middle and two high schools. It has set up the Sarvodaya Planning and Training Centre, Udyog Vadi and Udyog Mandir and the Antodaya Centre. It runs a papad rolling centre, milk-cooperatives in tribal areas and a cooperative paper mill. Social Work and Research Centre, Tilonia (Rajasthan) covers activities, like ground water survey, drilling of wells and installation of pumps, supply of farm inputs (land reforms and pre-schooling. Child in Need Institute, Daulatpur, 24-Parganas, West Bengal) extends primary health care to pre-school children and health and nutrition education to women. It conducts five health clinics in the area. The Agro Industrial Community Development Project of Banwasi Seva Ashram, Mirzapur (Uttar Pradesh) works for a comprehensive development of village-training in improved agricultural practices, literacy centres, rural engineering, family planning education, leadership training, legal-aid, etc.

SEWA RURAL

Sewa Rural, Society for Education Welfare and Action Rural (1980) is a voluntary organisation working in the field of community

development--presently engaged in health care but proposing to expand its activities in other areas too. The promoters are a group of young professionals, influenced by the spiritual ethos of Swami Vivekananda, life-mission of Mahatma Gandhi and the American spirit of vitality and crave for freedom, a society to which they were exposed in their early career building. The Sewa Rural, therefore, worships God in the poor. Daridrya Narayan, according to Vivekananda, is "the only God that exists, the only God I believe in--my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races".

The Agency believes in enthusing people for community work that would benefit them. Along with spiritual outlook and scientific approach, the main support for social service activities comes from people's participation, and mobilisation of local people motivated toward self-help. The promoters believed in this process "which will entail education and re-education, learning and relearning, a process that will humanise and deepen spiritual instincts".

The Agency also believes in developmental partnership with the government. Within the larger systemic restraints which governmental organisations are subjected to, there are sizable areas of co-operation too. It helps diversion of public resources for community work and elimination of duplication of service. Voluntary associations gain more by modifying their schemes and make these suitable to public accountability through government. It is with this collaborative attitude that Sewa Rural was entrusted with the management of 10 village health works and in a course the government of Gujarat transferred the management of all health services in 40 villages around to realise "Health for all by 2000 AD".

The Agency has become legitimised through its efforts of establishing identity with the community around. The social and status barriers are weakened by informal interaction and participation in local cultural activities. Secondly, the lowest functional staff, like nurses, X-ray technicians are recruited locally from the community itself. They may lack requisite qualification, it is made up by practical training and this practice worked better than recruiting an outsider. Constant evaluation by the group, checking what was expected and what was realised and why keeps the Agency vitalised.

Beginning with the management of Kasturba Hospital at Jhagadia (District Bharuch, Gujarat), originally managed by Kasturba Medical Aid Society, the health activities now cover a full-fledged hospital with 40 beds, implementation of intensive community health project and a T.B. centre. Door-step health care has been developed and an extensive health education programme conducted with audio-visuals for health and hygiene, exhibitions, street plays and participative campaigns. To continue the process once started, village level

health committees have been formed. The Agency has helped Zilla Parishad, Bharuch, in introducing Nirdhum Chulla (smokeless chulla) in the project villages. In 1985, Sewa Rural was awarded Sesakawe Health prize by the WHO Geneva for its innovative work in health development. Much in store and much more in vision, the success story of Sewa Rural is encouraging. Its future plans go beyond health, covering water management, baseline economic survey, organising public libraries, establishing Khet skwa kendra, compilation of vital statistics, extending vocational-training, legal aid services, taking promoters and participants nearer to the vision of God of the poor, what Vivekananda called "the illiterate, the ignorant and the affected".

A variety of activities from remedial to developmental have been undertaken by voluntary associations complementing developmental efforts in general and realisation of welfare of the weaker sections of society in particular. And the success stories cited above are really encouraging. The success of Pandu Mevas Development Agency is due to the integrated approach adopted by the PMDA, coordination of various agencies working at district level, and associating officials of these agencies with the meetings of the PMDA. The success equally owes to the elite association of state and national level agency and the reverence which Sir Sayajirao Diamond Jubilee and Memorial Trust enjoys in the minds of the people of this erstwhile princely state of Gaekwar. The VIAS is associated with Gandhian influence in the state and the success goes to the continued interaction between the people and the VIAS Workers infusing greater confidence in people and encouraging their participation in public affairs. The leadership of Tilonia project is of young professionals motivated in development, and believes in constantly experimenting with the methods linking activities to the real needs of the people and understanding these by socialising with the village way of living. Child in Need Institute also believes in community participation as a key to success of welfare programmes. One must not work for rural people but work with rural people. That is why CINI is not merely a catalyst but an actor in the process of development.

SOME CRITICAL AREAS IN VOLUNTARY ACTION

Participation of voluntary associations in the process of development has been an accepted part in our efforts of development. The Community Development Movement, in a sense, revolutionised the concept of administration and it is here that people from rural areas were first associated with the administration of programmes intended for their own development. It is this participation which elevated

'interest' in individual gains to the 'faith' in community benefits.

The main problem in implementing programmes for the welfare of weaker sections is to reach the benefit to the real needy client. People lack information and knowledge about the services and there are built-in limitations in the organisation so the benefits do not flow smoothly. Thus, one must have information that a Primary Health Centre is located in the area and that it offers useful services. Secondly, the administrative apparatus also must be so designed that it allows smooth processes to realise the objectives of a PHC.

Information and knowledge is an extension function and voluntary organisations, more than bureaucratic structures, are best suited for the task. It is through continued activities and continued stay that voluntary associations get socialised with local surrounding and local identity. Dedicated workers of Agro-Industrial Community Development Project, Mirzapur, stayed in the area to get a local feel. Padyatra (procession on foot) in the project area helped the agency to get insight in local problems and locally available resources. In Vedchhi project, students in schools engage in constructive work in the village along with their regular studies and the school teacher acts as a change-agent and educates villagers on various developmental schemes, operated or to be operated in the project area. The experience of the SWRC (Tilonia) workers is that it was curative health programme that helped the agency to reach people as the programme echoed their basic need. The SWRC leadership, young professionals, have foregone lucrative jobs prospects in urban areas in favour of working with rural people. The lesson is that voluntary associations should not be felt 'alien' to the beneficiary groups.

Regular interaction between agency authorities and beneficiaries would 'politicise' them and through participation would organise them as partners in the process of development. At CINI clinics, mothers are made to stay at and are educated on proper health care. It is the functional literacy of mothers that has made their participation in nutrition programmes effective. In Mirzapur project, informal gatherings and discussions with villagers and local leaders have always been found encouraging and people, the experience tells, come out with their problems and probable solutions within the locally available resources. The VIAS experiment proves that a continued interaction between the people and its workers have made people confident and participative.

Another crucial area is appropriate organisation to reach the target-group and its character. With massive aid to relief work, a growing need for professionalism is felt in the actual working of these institutions. There would be a generation gap between the

promoters of these social agencies and the new leadership coming up to man these services. The original Valod group (VIAS) has been of upper caste Brahmins and Baniyas and have been influenced by Gandhian appeal. The new recruits lack this and look to the activity as a job. Motivation of young leadership on moral grounds would soon become inadequate, voluntary associations need to search out for volunteers, paid workers, or provision of out of pocket allowance for honorary workers. Also, it is necessary to achieve professional morality rather than the traditional ethical morality. Professional associations, involvement would be responsive to the group needs according to the nature and intensity of needs--from minimum sympathetic participation, when group is completely independent and self sufficient, to the maximum as the central core around which the group is formed (at least in the earlier stages) and over a period scaling down and associating in relation to particular problems and activities.

Organisational apparatus for development also exhibits certain weaknesses. Not only that programmes are oriented towards material benefits and consumption items--like supply of roof tiles, free supply of books and school uniform--than development or production items--like nala-bunding, loans for milch cattle, facilities for vocational training--but the middle and lower level bureaucracy also joins hands with the rural elite and divert benefits to them. This bureaucracy belongs to the numerically strong rural caste and happily joins with the non-official rural elite (of the same social status) interested in development but not in extending benefits of development to the weaker sections of the society. Such an association reduces risk in realising schemes' target and saves administration from undertaking strenuous extension work. Voluntary association in this context have an important role to correct this situation. It was felt that the presence of the VIAS workers in the area made governmental bureaucracy more responsive to the needs of the people and careful in dealing "voluntary associations which are characterised by human touch and close personal contact are in a better position to mobilise community resources for welfare programmes".⁸

Administration of specific programmes is one way. Equally important is to check distortions in the system due to political influence of the rural elite on the operating bureaucracy. A separate distribution system, if installed, may help in reaching out to the weaker sections. Its administrative efficiency will also be judged with the realisation of this specific task (e.g., Small Farmers Development Agency). This may help politicisation of the unorganised weaker sections. Some structural reforms in administration as suggested by the Asoka Mehta Committee on Panchayati Raj

institutions, like representation on population basis, reservation of chairmanship of Mandal Panchayats, where these communities are in majority, activising social justice committees, social audit by legislature, etc., may ease the situation.

Getting weaker sections in the mainstream of development is really more a social and political problem than an administrative one. The new leadership must show political will to live up to the expectations of the developmental process. Social movements, like Bhudan and Sarvodaya, have a moral base, political movements, like Naxalites have a radical base, and reformist movements, like voluntary association adopt a functional base. If the first and third strategies are not adopted, the way out would be political movements and the society on road to development will have to pay high social costs involved in this strategy.

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS: A STRATEGY IN DEVELOPMENT

In developing societies, voluntary associations experience difficulties in securing social acceptance and functional appreciation. The 'atomistic' base and 'contract' features binding social relationship patterns in the West are helped by a high degree of structural differentiation. The social 'ethos' of developing countries stands on a different footing. Here social obligation is supported more by a sense of abiding religious 'duty' than by a sense of secular individual right. Low rate of economic growth, poor and discontinuous communication, overbearing paternalistic attitude of government do restrict the effective growth of voluntary associations.

But it is here that they are most needed. Developing societies lack secondary structures. Voluntary associations providing these, indicate areas of progress and welfare and help to coordinate efforts to mobilise social energy towards realising development.

More than a strategy, voluntary associations express the spirit of free life which makes democracy "the most cherished way of organising patterns of living and patterns of thinking". Discussions and compromises constitute the essence of democracy. And it is through healthy interaction between formal agencies of government and informal agencies of voluntary associations that policies and programmes reflecting truer interests would be formulated and administered. Where societies tolerate the existence of voluntary associations, encourage their participation, justify their involvement, individual grievances are elevated to operational group demands.

Developing societies also lack knowledge at society's level. The vast fund of knowledge is the outcome of the combined interaction of voluntary associations working in different fields and generating

knowledge dealing with specific cases and placing it in the social communication net, strengthening and diversifying the social fund. It is this process that makes knowledge a stock of the society. And it is this knowledge that sustains the process of change and stabilises democracy.

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Voluntary Action Agencies and Social Welfare

V. JAGANNADHAM

"Voluntary action is distribution without tears because it substitutes higher taxation by citizen sacrifice.

--DOUGLAS HOUGHTON

Priorities in Voluntary Organisations, London,
The National Council of Social Service, 1967, p. 23

SOCIAL WELFARE has its roots in voluntary action and had been sustained by it from several centuries in the past up to the present. The role and realities of voluntary action in social welfare, however, differ from generation to generation and place to place. Voluntary action in development has different dimensions from voluntary action in social welfare. In the former, self-interest and profit motive prompt people to voluntary action. In the latter, self-interest and profit motive are seldom present. Further, voluntary action in a close-knit homogenous rural agrarian community has as its basis mutual aid as well as patron-client relationship whereas the same could not be said to exist in an alienated industrial society and in anomic urban habitations. Thirdly, voluntary action in a Welfare State may altogether be of a different nature than in a laissez faire State. In the latter, voluntary action may be a catalyst for community mobilisation of concern and care for the helpless, needy and the handicapped few while in the former, voluntary action may become institutionalised and often acts as agents of State which utilises their services for its own ends through the mechanism of grants-in-aid and supply of technical experts. Both grants and experts carry with them certain degrees of direction, supervision and control. Voluntary action in a Welfare State raises a conceptual debate as to how far is voluntary action voluntary, if at all it is voluntary.

VOLUNTARY ACTION IN SOCIAL WELFARE IN INDIA

With what are we contrasting voluntary action? If it is with State action, we must hasten to point out that voluntary action has been the core process of community life in the past, because there the influence and control of the State were minimal in a predominantly agrarian economy and rural community; whereas, today, in a post-industrial society, with big business, big industry and big governments pervading the big-global society, State action is all-pervasive in social life. What were formerly the responsibilities of the family, the kin group, the religious orders, and the occupational communities have now become the responsibilities of State, subject to supervision and control, if not direct provision by the statutory authorities under the impact of an ideology of Welfare State, welfare economy and social justice. Today, the distinction between State and society has become blurred in favour of legal controls through government agencies with or without participation by and accountability to the people.

Historically, the modern State's concern for social welfare has been a century and half old. Its beginnings could be traced to regulation of conditions of work of women and children in the early stages of industrial revolution in England. Later, it has been extended to social security legislation adopted by Bismark of Germany to stem the tide of communism. The International Labour Organisation, set up after the World War I has, through its recommendations and conventions, extended the areas of labour welfare in many industrialised and industrialising countries. The real impact on the State action for social welfare came with President Roosevelt's 'New Deal' to handle the misery of USA citizens caused by world-wide depression in the thirties of this century. The Beveridge Report and the post-war reconstruction plans of many war-torn countries gave a new fillip to the extended approaches of fighting the giants of poverty, squalor, misery, ill-health and ignorance mentioned in the Beveridge Report. The war on poverty gained momentum in the sixties in the developed countries but of late the ideology of Welfare State is passing through a crisis in the United Kingdom and USA. Spread of privatisation has given to Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of England, a unique opportunity to be a third-time-elected majority leader of the Conservative Party in the Parliament. Similarly, the doctrine of Reaganomics has given the second term election for President Reagan in USA. It looks as though the philosophy of minimum government is on the rise without much hope of the ability of voluntary action grappling with the new problems.

Voluntary action has a different ethos in the developed countries

like UK, USA, etc. Besides the economic prosperity accelerated by the protestant ethic, scientific and technological development, their cultural heritage has been marked by a struggle for freedom for personal faith, individual self-reliance and personality development. With prosperity, voluntary action has manifested itself in social activism, human concerns and flair for organised action outside government sphere. But the advanced technologies of developed countries have been throwing up highly complex social evils, environmental pollution, socio-economic tensions, etc., leading to a spiralling of crime graph and loosening of family ties. The emerging socio-economic problems could not be managed by unaided voluntary action or by becoming partners in joint action by the State and non-governmental organisations. The need of the hour is total participation by all citizens.

Traditionally, the relationships between State and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been similar to a parallel bar where both governments and volunteers act side by side in social or community services, in social security or social welfare areas. When, however, the problems grow beyond the capacity of volunteers or voluntary organisations to tackle, as in research into AIDS or supply of massive relief services, the principle of Extension Ladder applies. Under this, the initiative may be taken by volunteers or NGOs, but in course of time the government takes over the provision of services or reliefs and the voluntary organisations enter new fields of service to explore and experiment with new initiatives. In the joint-sector enterprises, where the government operates through government sponsored or aided NGOs, there is a fear of NGOs being swamped by government controls or bureaucratic procedures. As observed by Rajni Kothari in his article "NGOs, the State and World Capitalism" (published in *Social Action*, October-December 1986, pp. 359-77), where such an event takes place, it is apprehended that "genuine voluntarism cannot maintain its independence and its capacity to make the State and its plans accountable to the people and care to their needs...."

Some Realities and Trends

Apart from this threat to genuine voluntarism, the complex and subtle nature of the subjects to be handled by voluntary organisations in the alienated anomic urban agglomerations, the interface relations between social servants and their clients is hard to maintain. The delivery of welfare services has become so highly technical and formalised that there is need to employ professionally trained skilled personnel whose interest may be careeristic rather than that of a committed 'volunteer'. Vast sums of money are

required to satisfy the needs of 'beneficiary' citizens and it is anybody's guess as to how much is being spent on 'establishment' and what benefits reach the clients. In some cases, the states use privately raised funds under the cloak of voluntary action for strengthening their own party ideologies or personal policies. In other words, the global society of today is facing new problems in sustaining the traditional ethos of voluntary action in development or social welfare and more particularly in managing the large scale voluntary organisations without the corrosive influence of 'bureaucracy' which is hitherto associated with State action.

The tradition of Social Welfare has been different in India. Being predominantly rural and agrarian, even today, its traditions of social welfare are marked by voluntary action in extended families and occupation groups and religious trusts. India, however, is passing through a transition from a colonial to a free nation and from agrarian to industrial economy and from rural to urban society. The transitional phenomena is manifest in the many layers of culture jostling on the roads and in the markets. Voluntary action in social welfare in the modern sense has, to put it arbitrarily, begun with the efforts to abolish Suttee and other social customs characterised as 'social evils' which needed to be reformed by voluntary action as well as by legislation. The social reform approach is supplemented and aided by the provision of modernised community services, like public health, sanitation, medical relief, formal education through schools, college and professional education in different specialities, and public recreation through modern games and sports. When industrialisation has been growing apace, labour welfare and elementary social security measures, like pensions and provident funds, etc., were provided by the government and corporate sectors. These were, in course of time, particularly after Independence, complemented by social welfare measures for the poor and weaker sections under the development programmes of the series of Five Year Plans since 1950 when the new constitution and democratic planning came into force.

What was stated in the Third Five Year Plan with regard to child welfare applies equally to the goal and means of social welfare of citizens in general:

Child Welfare means and can mean, if an economic plan is envisaged, nothing short of the total well-being of the child. It comprises the totality of measures... economic, administrative, technical, educational and social... to give each individual an equality of opportunity for growth and development.

The two noteworthy aspects are the "totality of measures" and "equality of opportunity for growth and development" of each individual. The democratic ideology and the decentralised planning process in India provide for an active role for voluntary action both in development and social welfare spheres. Particularly in social welfare, the Government of India has taken a pioneering step of establishing the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in 1953 consisting largely of voluntary social workers and some ex officio government officials.

In the following year, i.e., 1954, the CSWB constituted State Social Welfare Advisory Boards "to mobilise public cooperation through voluntary organisations; to strengthen the existing voluntary organisations; to start voluntary organisations in areas that do not have them". Two-fold assumptions underlie this pioneering experiment, namely, to bring together the State Power (Parbhu Satta) and the Community Power (Jana Satta). The idea underlying is a combination in relay theory of the parallel bar and the extension ladder approaches in countries like the United Kingdom. The hypothesis is that the community is the best judge of what and how to do for promoting well-being of people. It is further believed that by mobilising the enthusiasm and knowledge of local workers, and channelling assistance to them through the Central and State Welfare Boards, the government could mobilise manyfold the resources for and the effectiveness of the welfare programmes. In course of time, attempts have been made to dovetail welfare programme into development plans and bring about a reinforcement mutually of welfare and development.

The relay process has been in operation for nearly four decades. One aspect of the relay and reinforcing process needed mention. The schemes in each plan are, to a large extent, financed by financial assistance of the federal government but in the subsequent plan the previous plans programmes have to be financed by the state government. The CSWB distributes grants broadly on the principle of 'matching grants' raised by voluntary organisations.

Apart from the CSWB, there have emerged, since independence, other government organised NGOs--engaged in the so called 'voluntary action' in socio-economic welfare. These may be described as para-governmental organisations. These organisations have, as their main purpose, promoting of economic development but they are also encouraging welfare of families and occupational groups. The Khadi and Village Industries Association is one such example. Secondly, there is a recently established Waste Land Development Board. The latter deals broadly with optimum land utilisation. Several other development boards dealing with pollution, ecology, etc., have been

established. Another trend of quasi-party-government sponsored organisations is the establishment of new trusts in the names of deceased leaders and/or their spouses. The Kasturba Gandhi Trust, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Nehru and Kamala Nehru Memorial Trust, Indira Gandhi Trust and so on are a few examples of such trusts.

The public sector industries, owned and operated by the government, also engage themselves in social welfare activities for the families of the workers as well as for the residents of the neighbourhood in such activities as family and child welfare, women welfare, etc. Many private corporations--industrial, business and welfare--such as of tribals, scheduled castes, backward classes, and of weaker sections--such as women and children, the handicapped, etc.--have been started to promote their development and welfare on a sectoral, sectarian and also secular basis. The interesting point to note about voluntary action and social welfare since independence has been the integration and reciprocity of national development and social welfare. The distinction between State investment for development and social action for welfare is becoming blurred and indistinct.

During the struggle for Independence, the 'freedom fighters', who were 'untrained' but 'committed' to sacrifice, became social servants, but since Independence, status seekers seem to be attracted to voluntary action in social welfare. The complexity and magnitude of the nature and forms of social welfare activities made it necessary to impart training in skills in academic institutions to organise and manage the new social welfare activities. Consequently, trained social workers with competence have been working side by side with untrained social workers with commitment in voluntary and non-governmental organisations more than in governmental organisations where the generalist administrators occupy top positions of social welfare departments. Trained social workers may be competent, but they seem to be more governed by 'careerism' while commitment may be secondary; whereas, untrained social workers may have benevolent motivations but their eagerness for status perquisites compels us to opine that sacrifice is secondary in their case. The tendency of politicians to call themselves as social workers in describing their occupation or profession is noteworthy. The bludgeoning government organised/supported NGOs are attracting many politicians to 'voluntary social work'.

The first decade after Independence has witnessed expansion and diversification of voluntary action in social welfare. By the end of that decade, a couple of noteworthy developments have taken place: (1) Renuka Ray Committee submitted its Report on Social Welfare and the Welfare of Scheduled Castes, and (2) Balwantrai Mehta Committee

reported on adoption of Democratic Decentralisation as a means of promoting local action for development. The two reports stimulated voluntary action in social welfare-cum-development under the aegis of the CSWB and the Panchayati Raj local government institutions in rural areas.

Consequences

The above mentioned developments had other unintended consequences within the larger framework of democratic ideology and government. Together with the ideology of 'Welfare State' (even though its opposite, namely, ill-fare state could not be conceived) and the sudden ushering in of universal adult franchise under the Constitution in 1950 have released 'populist' policies to gain the favour of 'Vote Banks' among the clusters of the urban and rural poor. By themselves, the populist policies would have had a healthy effect on both democracy and social well-being but unfortunately the policies had a deleterious effect of 'politicising' welfare. This trend has set in motion an unhealthy competition among governments and non-government welfare organisations as well as political parties and voluntary institutions to engage in scramble for scarce resources in the name of welfare. Such a scramble has not only an adverse effect on voluntary action in social welfare but has also tended to deflect development into subsidised consumption without improving productivity. Further, people developed a vested interest in subsidised services without engaging in disciplined efforts or payment for consumption. This might have benefited political parties, which are described as small groups of people organised to benefit from the votes of the bulk of the common people. This trend has provoked an acrimonious debate in the country about relating welfare to development and vice versa, both through government and voluntary efforts.

The politicisation of development and welfare have resulted in appointment of Kudal Commission to investigate into the working of 'Gandhian institutions' (which were voluntary in origin and operations) particularly with regard to the receipt and utilisation of foreign funds and government funds in India. It has been investigating for four years but has not been able to complete its work. The appointment of Kudal Commission has been considered by many as partisan in intent, dilatory in its methods of work and ambivalent in its approach.

Next, the Government has recently come forward with a proposal to form a Voluntary Council of India (VCI) and formulate a code of conduct through a law of the Parliament (The analogy of Charities Act of 1960 in UK may not stand comparison to the contemplated legislation in India). The Bill is regarded as the climax of a series of

steps, such as the Kudal Commission, the Finance Act of 1983, the Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Act, etc., to "depoliticising activists" engaged in the upliftment of the less fortunate sections.

The erosion of voluntary action in community efforts in development and social welfare by government grants and controls is not a totally new phenomenon. It has been an extension of an old trend under the foreign rule in the cooperative sector. The cooperative movement was started in the early years of this century (1904). But by thirties and forties, the voluntary nature of the cooperative movement was eroded initially by the departmentalised audit and supervision and later on by supersessions of cooperative societies through appointment of special officers. Such steps were common in the local governmental spheres. Such encroachments on the autonomy of local bodies and cooperative societies were viewed as dangerous erosion of democratic ethos and ideology. Populism seems to fulfil the prophesy that "Democracy is Government fuelled by the will of people" organised into contending political parties competing to perpetuate themselves in power by fair or foul means.

Voluntary action in development as well as in social welfare has been facing problems of credibility not only from political forces but also from organisational and management sources as much as the crisis of leadership to respond to the challenges of transitional societies. Traditional societies have had their stabilised systems of patron-client relationships, gift exchanges and the discipline of virtue flowing from Dharma, Dana, etc. The new societies exposed to global plural ideologies and impacts have no such stabilised conventions and organisations to manage transformations in transitional societies. Both governmental systems and managerial cultures have been imitating the ex-colonial rulers or currently developed societies without their managerial infrastructure or their cultural legacy. The imitational approaches are throwing up leaders without the discipline of the traditional culture or the roots in the imitated culture. This imitational aspect of modernisation of traditional societies needs a thorough study in order to remedy the shortcomings in the management of societal change. There seems to be an identity crisis in transitional societies in matters of training leadership and management of human resources. It is easier to manage money and machines but not men and their motivations for self-development and group welfare.

Need for a New Approach

The creation of a Ministry of Human Resources Development under a senior Minister with Cabinet rank has raised hopes of giving a new look to the investment on and development of human resources. It is

hoped that there would be an integrated or coordinated approach in planning and administration of policies and strategies of human resources which have been hitherto approached piecemeal and fragmented for administrative convenience and budget allocations. It is too soon to make any estimate of this newly formed ministry and we have to keep our fingers crossed for the infant ministry to overcome childhood crises.

If there is anything constant in the human world, it is the phenomena of change. The change is a product of endowed resources of the country and human efforts born out of an interaction of both leaders and people in all walks of life. This is where the Periclean statement, namely, "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty", has relevance to be inculcated into the minds of people of every generation. Two other statements also need depth analysis: "Social Welfare is the care and nurture of the freedom of man", but then it is said that "Freedom is not a fruit of every climate and it is not, therefore, within the capacity of every people". These are challenging statements for critical assessment by every freedom-loving society. At no point is the level of the river higher than at its source. The people of a nation are the source of its leaders and managers of both development and social welfare. Therefore, human development has a greater urgency than mechanical material development.

Both leaders and people have to be vigilant in balancing State-Societal actions for promoting human welfare under their respective jurisdictions. No rigid formula could be prescribed for attaining this balance that could be valid for all times and all places. Such a balance is a product of foresight and wisdom on the thought and conduct of people.

I have attempted in this essay to identify and explain the role of voluntary action in social welfare touching upon some aspects of the concepts, historical changes and contemporary realities as observed and experienced by me. While voluntary action has traditionally provided the sap and roots for social welfare and is still capable of providing the same, the transformations of social environment by big industry, big business, and big government have been undermining the genuineness of voluntary action in development and social welfare. The growth of Welfare State has created doubts about the future of voluntary action. That crisis seems to be on the wane but voluntary action has been facing a new crisis of the populist politics in an open society exposed to competing ideologies of super powers and advanced technologies. These newly emerging forces are creating new situations which require new social welfare approaches and demand a new leadership and personnel to

sustain freedom for and culture of voluntary action both for societal development and social welfare.

What the citizen will freely give up for work and objects nearer to his heart will not have the same inflationary consequences as higher taxation. This is the economic case for Voluntary Action. It is redistribution without tears.

--DOUGLAS HOUGHTON

Critical Appraisal of Voluntary Effort in Social Welfare and Development Since Independence

D. PAUL CHOWDHRY

THE CONSTITUTION adopted by the Constituent Assembly on January 26, 1950, declared India as a Welfare State. The question before the planners then was to see as to how State should fulfil its obligation of a Welfare State, particularly when a majority of its population was below poverty line. There was a very high rate of infant mortality, low literacy rate of women, rampant malnutrition and a large number of persons with social, mental, physical and political handicaps for whom we needed a network of social welfare services.

The British during their rule did not think of any social welfare services, like health, education and social welfare. Therefore, they did not create any department for social welfare. After independence, the Ministry of Education, which was handling some programmes of educational nature for the handicapped persons, was put incharge of social welfare also through creating a division.

After Independence, leadership in voluntary action in India was provided by the social workers who had worked under the leadership of Gandhiji. As a matter of fact, they were the ones who started the movement of voluntary action, both in urban and rural areas, in the fields of health, education, social welfare, adult education, rural development, etc.

Machinery for Social Welfare

The question before the planners was as to what kind of machinery should be created under the First Five-Year Plan for providing social developmental services to the down-trodden, the needy, the poor, the handicapped and the other weaker sections. In terms of fulfilment of constitutional obligations, machinery was created for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. However, in the seventh schedule to the Constitution which listed various subjects under the Centre and state lists, the term 'social welfare' did not find place therein. What was mentioned therein was only 'social planning'. Although, a division of social planning was created in the Planning

Commission in the early fifties, yet the planners under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru assisted by a pioneering voluntary social worker Durgabai Deshmukh decided in their wisdom and rightly so, that social welfare services should, by and large, be provided in the voluntary sector and the state responsibility should be in the nature of giving them financial and technical assistance. This concept became the basis of creation of the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in August, 1953 with a provision of Rs. 3 crore for the First Five-Year Plan for the entire country. A beginning was made with giving grants to the existing voluntary organisations, helping new voluntary groups to come up and receive assistance in the areas where these did not exist. This was a land-mark in the history of voluntary action in India. Durgabai Deshmukh was appointed the first Chairman of the CSWB which over the years, brought on the map of social welfare around 10,000 voluntary organisations engaged in different aspects of social development.

Competition with Government

Having made this substantial contribution with minimal costs of overhead administrative expenditure, depending largely on the free-time of the voluntary workers, in the mid-sixties, the Board started facing competition from the departments at the state and Central level. Earlier, the Ministry of Community Development and Panchayat Raj, which depended largely on the official machinery and the elected representatives of the people for social development programmes in the rural sector, did not see the voluntary agencies so favourably. In the mid-sixties, the voluntary action itself having crossed the highest level of growth of voluntary agencies reached the plateau and started declining when Durgabai Deshmukh left the Board and Jawaharlal Nehru passed away. The newly created Department of Social Welfare started implementing programmes through the State Directorates of Social Welfare which hitherto were being implemented by the Board through voluntary agencies. The government also started giving grants-in-aid to the voluntary agencies.

Voluntary Action in Rural Development

The programmes of Community Development and Panchayat Raj underwent several changes. It could hardly enlist people's participation or public cooperation even through the Panchayat Raj institutions, the Mahila Mandals and the Youth Clubs which were created by the bureaucracy. In 1967, the Division of Public Cooperation, first created in the Planning Commission for enhancing people's participation in the plan schemes, was transferred to the Ministry of Community Development (later Rural Development) and a few schemes of

strengthening and promotion of associate organisations, like Mahila Mandals and Youth Clubs were initiated to enhance public cooperation in rural development.

This was for the first time that rural development functionaries got exposure to voluntary agencies and vice versa. If one goes through the registers at the Reception in Krishi Bhawan, where the Ministry of Rural Development is located, one would find that until 1970, there were hardly any voluntary workers who visited Krishi Bhawan but the Reception's registers during the seventies and eighties would indicate that a large number of voluntary workers and voluntary agencies found access to the portals of the Ministry of Rural Development. The Ministry received voluntary organisations with open arms--not only to get their contributions and cooperation in the implementation of the integrated rural development programme, but also to enable them to utilise the funds available with the People's Action for Development India (PADI) as also to encourage industrial and business houses to earmark funds for various projects in rural development by giving them 100 per cent concession in income-tax. Thus, whereas the programmes of voluntary action in social welfare, beginning from 1953, reached their height during the decade 1953-1963, the decade of 1970-1980 saw the growth and development of voluntary action in rural development.

Social Activists

Encouraged by the incentives available from government and their concern for rural-rural poverty, exploitation, etc., some of the educated and qualified youngmen, some of them with foreign training, belonging to upper middle class families, decided to work in the rural areas as social activists. Some of them started their own innovative programmes and projects while others used financial assistance available from the government. Thus, a new type of voluntary movement started in the seventies in the context of rural development.

Similarly, in the fields of national adult education, family welfare, child development, educated youngmen and women, apart from making their valuable contributions, also made a strong dent on the government policies and programmes.

The government realised that it alone could not provide a network of such services and therefore, they needed the help and cooperation of the voluntary agencies. Although, there was an opposition from the bureaucracy in involving voluntary agencies in child development programmes, which was considered to be the responsibility of the government alone, yet a beginning has been made by involving voluntary agencies in integrated child development programmes, with the

assistance from government. Of course, in the training of functionaries at various levels for child development under ICDS, a major contribution has been made by the voluntary sector. The Indian Council of Child Welfare alone is responsible for running almost one-third of the training centres for training of Anganwadi workers.

Enquiry Commissions

On the one hand, government has helped in promoting voluntary action in education, health, family welfare, adult education, rural development, social welfare, etc., on the other, there has been not only political interference but criticism of the voluntary action and inadvertently creating conditions which helped ultimately destroying voluntary action once promoted and sponsored by the government itself. It began with the setting up of the enquiry commission on the affairs of the Bharat Sevak Samaj. This arose out of jealousy among some of the political leaders against those who built a network of institutions, agencies and projects under the Bharat Sevak Samaj. The Commission of Enquiry and its aftermath remained in existence for almost seven years when no work was done by this organisation. Its work came to a standstill. On the other hand, the government spent around Rs. 10 lakh on the Enquiry Commission and the follow-up action therefor. As every one knows, nothing came out of this enquiry; no action was taken against Bharat Sevak Samaj except to throttle its activities. Strangely enough, other voluntary organisations, particularly at the national level, were then merely watching the game. This demoralised the voluntary agencies and voluntary workers. They were helpless creatures as they had no common forum to discuss and fight against such issues which concerned every one of them.

Kudal Commission

Despite official verbiage about the magnificent role of the voluntary agencies in implementation of social development programmes, there was yet another step taken by the government and that was Commission of Enquiry by Justice Kudal about the working of some of the Gandhian organisations. This again, perhaps, was based on political vendetta. The Gandhian organisations which were once being supported and funded by the government were subject of enquiry. Here, also not only damage was done to the reputation of voluntary agencies but also to the projects at the field level. The other voluntary organisations once again remained silent spectators to this episode which resulted in harassment and demoralisation to voluntary action and the voluntary workers.

The recent example was of the appointment of an Enquiry Committee under the Chairmanship of Ex-Auditor and Comptroller General of

India, Shri Gian Prakash, over the affairs (mainly to look into complaints into its working) of the Indian Council of Child Welfare. The Council representatives resented inclusion in the terms of reference of the enquiry matters which were purely internal in nature and did not concern the utilisation or otherwise of government grants. Not only that the comments and recommendations in the enquiry report, which has now been published, indicate that the whole exercise was done on the basis of personal vendetta of an officer in the Ministry but the Committee also went out of its jurisdiction and its comments and recommendations are self-contradictory showing scant regard for voluntary workers and voluntary agencies, particularly when the Council has been given a big responsibility of training of functionaries running ICDS and creches and a large number of other programmes which normally government should have implemented.

Government Sponsored Voluntary Agencies

The government has also created under different ministries/agencies of its own in the nature of registered societies, called autonomous institutions, which implement government policies, undertake programmes of training, research, monitoring, etc. There are also national institutes and boards. Under the Department of Women and Child Development there are also such institutions, one of them being the Central Social Welfare Board and the other the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development. Similarly, the Ministry of Welfare has several autonomous institutions for welfare of the handicapped which, though registered as societies, are autonomous institutions. In the creation of such institutions, the government involves voluntary agencies and voluntary workers for their management but at the same time the bureaucrats are jealous of the so-called autonomy and shun any expert or voluntary leader who speak of the autonomy of such an organisation. Some of these are virtually being run as subordinate or attached offices of the government and are used by the bureaucrats for such steps and measures as they would not have been able to do under bureaucratic and financial procedures under the government. Wherever this is allowed by the head of the institutions, things go well, but wherever somebody reminds them of the autonomy of such institutions, he or she is in trouble as also the Institute. This is another dimension given to voluntary action. Perhaps here voluntary action means giving freedom to bureaucracy itself to do what they like and yet not be accountable for such actions got executed through scapegoat called the Director or Chairman of the so-called autonomous registered society under their thumb.

Government Support

Apart from financial assistance, there are other methods for promotion of voluntary action. These are posting of government officers on deputation with voluntary agencies with or without assistance for strengthening their infrastructure and providing technical guidance for developing and improving their programmes, organising training for their functionaries--both paid and voluntary--and initiating research into their needs and problems. The National Institutes of: Public Cooperation and Child Development; Rural Development; Health and Family Welfare; National Council for Educational Research and Training; Central Social Welfare Board, etc., are some of the organisations, which apart from financial assistance provide technical and academic inputs through field counselling, training, research and monitoring for the growth and development of voluntary agencies. But here, again, there is much to be desired. Despite the fact that the training and research input is available free to the voluntary agencies, a large number of them are unable to utilise it because they either have no infrastructure and/or no motivation. These institutions are located at the national level and their medium of instructions is English. Many of grassroots level agencies are unable to take advantage of these training programmes. What is required is to build grassroots level, block-based institutions through help in such activities, which they need the most.

NEEDS AND PROBLEMS

Common Forum and Coordination

One of the needs and problems of voluntary agencies is to have a common forum with a mechanism of coordination among themselves as also between the national headquarters and their State and district branches. The linkages are needed both at functional and geographical levels. For this purpose, they need some minimal infrastructure for which it is very difficult to raise donations. Although the government has accepted, as a matter of policy, providing financial assistance in the nature of administrative grants to these agencies but apart from the meagre size of the grant and the various conditions attached thereto, this has not been able to help the voluntary agencies at the national level to perform their functions of coordination, leadership, guidance, innovation, etc.

Although the Central Social Welfare Board had coordination among the voluntary agencies as one of their functions, yet for a variety of reasons, it could not be accepted as an agency to bring together all the national level voluntary organisations on a common forum. A proposal was mooted in the fifties that the membership of the Central

Social Welfare Board should not be of an individual by name but that of national organisations. In other words, all fifty and odd national level organisations should automatically become members of the Central Social Welfare Board in their own right, but this was not agreed to for a variety of reasons. Thus, today, almost all the voluntary organisations, particularly those at the national level, face considerable problems which are common to each one of them but they have no mechanism or a forum where they can sit together to sort out the problems of overlapping, duplication as also facilitate exchange of information, data collection, research, training, publication, etc., and at the same time place before the government their common difficulties which arise out of government action. Perhaps the vested interests in the government would not like to see the voluntary agencies strong. Over the years, the strength of the voluntary action is weakening Plan after Plan, despite large funds being provided for social development to be utilised through voluntary organisations.

Legal Issues

Then there are problems arising out of the various enactments, like the Income Tax Act, Labour Laws, Industrial Dispute Act, Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, Children's Act, SITA and absence of uniform Act on Adoption, etc.

Relationship with Government

For lack of proper policy, voluntary action in the field of social development has received a set back. Plan after Plan there has been increase in numerical growth of the voluntary agencies and their spread in different fields, like rural development, adult education, health, social welfare, child development, etc., yet in the absence of a clear policy on: relationship of the government and the voluntary agencies, role of voluntary agencies in development, and nature of community participation and public cooperation have created considerable problems, including absence of trained and qualified manpower of the voluntary agencies, competition among the voluntary agencies on the one hand, and between the government and voluntary on the other. Some time half a dozen representatives of voluntary agencies express their concern about these matters and problems in small discussion groups which does not take us any further.

Erosion of Old Virtues

The voluntary organisations have been known in the past for their virtues and qualities more than the governmental institutions that these are dedicated and impart human-touch, innovativeness with

flexibility in their working, and are nearer to the community having first hand knowledge of their problems and needs. Over the years, these virtues have eroded, due to a variety of factors.

Our anxiety to professionalise social welfare service and development coupled with disappearance of the dedicated workers of the past, the virtues of dedication and human-touch among voluntary workers are now disappearing. Professionalism is one of the factors which makes inroads into the dedication and human-touch. However, it does not mean that all the professionals lack these qualities. With the introduction of grant-in-aid system, with rigorous rules and regulations and introduction of management concepts in the voluntary agencies, they tend to become bureaucratic, some of them even copy work styles of the government, with the result that some of the voluntary agencies have also lost their quality of flexibility.

Erosion of Innovation

The credit goes to the Central Social Welfare Board for not only creating a network of voluntary organisations but also a foolproof grant-in-aid system by starting from a scratch in 1953 which today is the basis of financial assistance to voluntary organisations. However, it has now been realised that the grant-in-aid system initiated by the Central Social Welfare Board, which was followed by various central and state governments, had an adverse effect on voluntary action. The reason is that the voluntary agencies were given structured schemes prepared by the government which they have to run as 'agents' of the government with 50 to 90 per cent funds from the Government. Thus, almost for three decades the grant-in-aid system of the government tied the hands of the voluntary agencies. As a result, when the voluntary agencies were given free hand in preparing project proposals for innovative projects of community development, public cooperation, child development and agriculture through the Ministry of Rural Development, bodies like National Children's Fund (NCF) and People's Action for Development India (PADI) respectively, found it hard to work out proposals for innovative projects. Today, voluntary agencies ask for schemes without realising that the schemes are to be made by the voluntary agencies based on the felt-needs of the community. In fact, one of the constraints on utilisation of the funds of the National Children's Fund is lack of proposals for innovative projects for child development.

However, the government has vested interest in this state of affairs in order to use them as scapegoats by giving them programmes which the government is not able to handle properly, and politicising these agencies for using them for personal ends of those in power. It is time that there emerges a strong leadership among the

voluntary agencies who dictate their terms to the government rather than becoming dependent on the doles, mercy, and patronage of government. If they really represent people, they have the strength to dictate their terms. But first they have to put their own house in order, have a code of conduct which should be followed and try to prove their worth, value of their contribution and superiority of their work to that of the government. Only then they can claim their status in the community.

Role of Central Social Welfare Board in the Changing Social Context

MEHER C. NANAVATTY

REVIEW OF the role of the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in the second half of the eighties calls for an examination of following three areas of influence: (a) changing political scene, (b) changing social welfare context of the people, and (c) effect of contribution of the CSWB on the status of voluntary social welfare organisations in the country. Without such an examination, any recommendation on the work of the Board remains inadequate.

INTRODUCTION

Political Scene

The political context in India has undergone a sea-change during the last 35 years. In 1953, when the CSWB was established under the chairmanship of Durgabai Deshmukh, the then member of the Planning Commission, there was one-party rule throughout the country. The political atmosphere was inspired by the spirit of national Constitution and the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. It was surcharged with a sense of urgency to achieve the goals of nationalism, secularism and socialism through democratic process of development. A sense of service, development and change prevailed. The CSWB was established with the primary purpose of promoting social action in the field of social welfare. Although this was the expressed goal, the unexpressed purpose was also to secure support and cooperation of the people to the government and to divert the prevailing discontent resulting out of poverty to constructive channels. This was but natural. Every measure of welfare and development remains imbibed with the purpose of securing support to the political system and the establishment. This is a dialectical manifestation of governmental activities in a democracy. It will be naive to consider social welfare apart from politics, although it is in the interest of the government to dissociate social welfare outwardly from politics. The chairpersons of the Central Board and the state advisory boards were

selected in support of the government. It cannot be helped, especially in a politically surcharged atmosphere in our country.

The political scene today has changed considerably. Different political parties in different states constitute respective governments although the writ of the Congress Government still prevails at the Centre and in majority of the states. This situation, however, is gradually changing adding to political instability. The public life is politicalised; self interests dominate national interests; parochialism dominates politics and the human relationship gets vitiated.

This is the political context in which the CSWB is required to operate. What are the implications? As the political life in the country is increasingly becoming unstable, the effort at promoting voluntary organisations for social action will become more difficult. More resistance will be come from parochial interests. Efforts will be made to promote destabilisation by anti-social forces making constructive work difficult. Value debasement in public life will come in the way of promotion of welfare. At the same time, the need for social action against negative social, economic and political forces will be increased. Greater determination at higher level of leadership will be called for to make welfare activities by voluntary organisations meaningful.

Social Welfare Context

The welfare context among people, especially those below the level of poverty, has deteriorated considerably. Although the level of poverty is claimed by the government to have been lowered from 70 per cent to 40 per cent, people find it difficult to make the two ends meet due to high cost of living and rising cost of fulfilling the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. In rural areas, the plight of landless labourers and small farmers has worsened severely. Most of the rural youth remains unemployed or partially employed. The urban poor living in slums, although better off than their counterparts in rural areas, work hard at many part-time jobs to meet the needs of his/her families. Their children are neglected and youth get exposed to many hazards of life. Their aspirations get consumerised. The desire of the family to rebuild their capacity to have a stable life by getting out of poverty, gets thwarted at every step. Their real values get debased. Their life becomes one of despondency and dependency. Some of them are exploited by the muscle men in their interest for anti-social practices. Although no systematic survey has been made of the rural and the urban poor by the CSWB, some of the sample studies indicate disturbing trends. The poor to whom the CSWB, is expected to address itself remains exposed

to many hazards of life. In practice, the Board does not usually deal with the real poor. Its clientele confines mainly to lower middle class or those living a marginal existence. Not even 10 per cent of the total population living near or below poverty level are estimated to be served by the activities of the Board.

Besides, the government has not centralised all grants-in-aid programmes through the CSWB, which was one of its original objectives. The Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Rural Development have their own separate activities of assistance for the poor. Most of this assistance is given through uneven quantum of grants. They are not standardised. Besides, the recent 10-Point Programme or the revised 20-Point Programme for the poor is displaced mainly through subsidies. It breeds corruption besides providing a political clout to the establishment. It makes people dependent rather than self-reliant. The programme does not bring awakening among people against poverty and the politico-economic forces that generate it. The programme neglects building capacity of people to be self-reliant, capable of fighting forces of exploitation. Drop-outs back to poverty are many.

This is the substratum of life of the poor that the Board is requested to deal with. What are the implications? The government has to be forced to centralise all grants for welfare and development under one body like the Board. It has to stop utilising the Board as its sub-office, introducing control at every step of its operation, including quantum of releasing grants three to four times a year and that too on the last date; controlling execution of different schemes; providing inadequate staff; and above all lack of freedom and trust in the operation of the work of the Board.

The challenge to lessen the burden of poverty among people is greater today than earlier. The need of removing forces of exploitation of the poor is real and, at the same time, more difficult. The Board has to analyse the causes of poverty among people and try to generate forces through its activities to lessen if not control these causes. On the one hand, the Board has to promote voluntary organisations for organising welfare activities; on the other, it has to resist governmental interference and control in its working.

Contributions of the Central Social Welfare Board

During 35 years of its existence, the Board has succeeded in promoting more than 10,000 voluntary agencies. This is indeed a phenomenal rise for which credit should go to the Board. But what is gained in quantity is not maintained in quality. Its emphasis on giving grants mainly, if not exclusively, for the programme activities has left the voluntary agencies without their infra-structure

of staff and organisation. The voluntary agencies have failed to establish high standard of services in the absence of professional workers. The continuity of work has also suffered. There are ups and downs in the very existence of these agencies. Their survival is dependent on the Board. They have, thus, developed dependency with the result that they have lost the conceptual role of voluntary sector in a democracy; viz., experimentation, innovation and acting as 'watch-dog' of the interest of people and of voluntary sector against governmental action. It is this price of dependency that the voluntary agencies have to pay for getting more than 50 per cent of grants from the establishment. Their reliance and belongingness to the local communities that they serve has suffered. They have lost the spirit of self-reliance through people's participation.

In addition, the Board, during 35 years of its existence, has primarily assisted marginal families and that too in a disjointed way. The very poor in the city slums, and in villages have not been systematically dealt with. The welfare activities, through grants, have not succeeded in building capacity of the beneficiary families for self-reliance. Their marginality of life continues in most of the cases. For example, the vocational training programme, which is more pronounced in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat and neglected in weaker states, like Rajasthan and Bihar, is not extensive enough to develop skills of work to become self-reliant. This has resulted only in supplementing family income that too not regularly. Similarly, the socio-economic programme is confined to a provision of only Rs. 3 crore per year for the whole country, in addition to sanctioning only 120 production units per year on an average. This is also true of the extension programme of the Board. Besides, as the approach to rehabilitation is not systematic, it does not relate to all members of the same family--i.e. children, youth, women and men and aged--to take them out of poverty. The promotional services of Balwadi, continuing education, vocational training are not related to members of the same family to make an impact. The preventive and promotive services are not integrated with curative and ameliorative services. No one knows how many families have been taken out of poverty during the last 35 years of work of the Board.

Giving of unplanned and uneven grants by the Board and by different ministries of the government to the same agencies has resulted in competition and jealousy among voluntary organisations. The earlier spirit of cooperation and coordination among them has vanished. Many of the office bearers treat their position as a status symbol developing desire to perpetuate themselves in their positions. Voluntary organisations have, thus become, 'private preserve' of individuals. The atmosphere of voluntariness has

suffered. This is more manifest at national and state levels rather than in the field.

This is the state of affairs of voluntarism at present. How could the CSWB correct this ailment? Possibly it is beyond its reach although it can generate certain principles of grants-giving which can prevent further deterioration.

There is, however, a new hope of voluntarism emerging in the country. Many conscientious youth, having felt disgusted with the prevailing affairs in the country, have taken to activism. They have grouped themselves into organisations of their own and started working with people, especially in rural areas and urban slums. Most of them are professionally trained individuals in different fields of development. They abhor government assistance, dislike working with establishment and rely on people's support. Many of them are doing admirable job for development of individuals, families and communities. Although no study of their existence is made by social scientists, it is estimated that they are more than 1,000 in organisations with more than 10,000 workers. It is true that some of them get assistance from foreign organisations. This can be questioned although this is a reflection of the suffocating procedure adopted by the establishment in managing assistance. There is a rebellion against the prevailing socio-economic system and the attitude of work adopted by administration towards voluntary action in the country. This rebellion of the youth needs to be recognised and encouraged in the interest of development of people without disturbing their functioning in the country.

This is the background of socio-economic forces in which the CSWB has to reconsider its role of strengthening voluntary action in the country. What are the implications for the Board to consider? The Board has to re-establish its earlier role of strengthening voluntary sector which exists today in a rather dispirited state. It has to gain its independence of functioning from the government. It has to establish standard of welfare services by providing infrastructure of organisation of voluntary agencies, helping them to establish standard of services and promoting cooperation and coordination among them. It has to adopt certain measures which can remove the habit of dependency among voluntary organisations. It has to reorganise its activities coordinating them suitably, introducing new ones to help voluntary sector acquire the spirit of self-reliance, relating more closely to local communities it tries to serve.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If the administration is serious about strengthening voluntary

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SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If the administration is serious about strengthening voluntary

sector in the country for promoting social development and welfare of people, especially those living below the level of poverty, it should reconsider its commitment to voluntarism. Mere claims do not convince people. Commitment to voluntarism can only be manifested through proper action. Half-hearted support harms the field of development and welfare besides creating doubts and distrust in the minds of the people. Some of the following suggestions and recommendations may be considered with advantage.

Policy

Policy towards voluntarism should be based on certain principles. They should include:

Integrated Approach to Grants-in-Aid

The present fissiparous approach of providing programmes of uneven assistance to voluntary organisations through the Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Rural Development, besides the CSWB, should be combined into one enlarged programme under the Central Social Development and Welfare Board, pooling all governmental grants together. The total amount, under present planned provision, may come to about Rs. 50 crore annually.

Establishment of an Autonomous Board

The enlarged Board should be given a statutory status with autonomy, independent of the present control of the different ministries. It should be held directly responsible to the government with the provision of presenting its annual report and securing approval of the budget by Parliament annually.

To strengthen the autonomous functioning of the newly constituted Board, it should be placed under the chairmanship of a High Court or a Supreme Court judge, preferably a woman.

Democratic Decentralisation of Administration

To ensure the federal structure of the nation, the state boards under the statute should be given certain powers to utilise funds on their own within the prescribed policy and principles included in the statute of the Board. This is necessary on two counts. Different states having different party government should be free to re-adjust their programme according to prevailing needs of people in respective areas at the same time the emerging parochialism of interests, both political and social, should be prevented from playing their influence. The policy for use of funds and development of programme should be laid down by the Central Board and strictly

adhered to and maintained through inspection, counselling and audit.

Approach to Social Development and Welfare

Strengthening Infrastructure

The primary objective of the Board is to strengthen voluntary organisations in the field of development and welfare. It is necessary to ensure proper organisational and administrative infrastructure of voluntary agencies by providing grants for employing professional staff. This practice is actually in vogue in the field of education. Central Ministry of Education and the State Departments of Education hold themselves responsible for funding the employment of trained teachers of private schools. This practice should be extended to the field of development and welfare.

After ensuring the standard of services through properly trained staff, the Board should grant 50 per cent assistance towards programme development of voluntary agencies, the other 50 per cent of programme expenditure should be met by voluntary organisations on their own with the help of local communities they serve. This will strengthen infrastructure of organisations besides relating them directly to the local communities.

Strengthening Family and Community Development

The grants-in-aid and extension service programme should be related integrally with development of the family and the local community through training and development of individual members of family, including the child, the youth, women and men. The present disjointed activities should be systematically integrated with the interests of the members of the family.

Additional provision should be made for developing local communities through community development centres for common activities of creche, balwadi, tutorial class for children, especially drop-outs, continuing education for women and men, vocational training of youth and adults and economic development activities for earning members of the families, day-care centres for children of working women, day-care centres for the aged, etc. The Board will then cease to be merely a post office for giving grants and acquire the responsibility of promoting development and welfare in the country.

Emphasising Awakening and Self-Reliance

In all these activities, the emphasis has to be on awareness of the causes of poverty and strengthening people's capacity for self-reliance. The organisation of balwadis, continuing education, tutorial class, vocational and skill training should all bear this

emphasis as an undercurrent. An atmosphere of work-culture and self-development requires to be generated in each local family and the community.

Programme Activities

During last 30 years, the programme activities have been developed as the need arose. Therefore, they remain unrelated with each other. They need to be grouped together now according to common requirement of the family and community. In place of the present ad-hoc approach of giving grants to agencies on the basis of requests made for individual activities, efforts must be made to study the needs of local communities and grants offered for integrated activities of development and welfare. For example, all activities of child welfare and women welfare, other than assistance to maintain institutions, should be grouped together and aids given on the basis of families served and the local community developed. Thus, the regrouping of the present programme may take the following shape:

Family and Community Based Activities	Institutional Support	Crisis Situation Programme
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-primary school/ Balwadi, creche, foster care services, nutrition centres, cultural and recreational activities, and maternity centres 2. Condensed courses of education, literacy and social education 3. Welfare extension projects 4. Craft centres and socio- economic activities, etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hostel for women 2. Homes for destitute women 3. Orphanages and fondling homes 4. Institutions for handicapped 5. Homes for the the aged and infirm 6. Holiday camps for children and youth 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special pro- gramme in cy- clone affected areas 2. Crisis ser- vices for women exposed to special harassment, etc.

Training programme of balwadi workers should be considered under the separate division of training of workers.

In revising the programme activities, greater emphasis be laid on preventive activities of economic development, skill training, vocational education, condensed courses, nursery schools and support to other welfare activities should be treated as supplementary with the objective of making the family self-reliant and self-supportive.

With the merger of other programmes of development, including rural development and family planning, the emphasis should shift to social development ensuring basic needs of earning, food, shelter, clothing, health and education services restricting the size of the family, recreation, cultural development and supportive emphasis on institutional services. The Board will also have to devise new programmes, both of development and welfare, after getting study reports of the changing developmental needs of people.

Training

Training of field workers and supervisors constitute a major responsibility of the Board. The present staff of the Board at Central and state level, if not professionally trained, should be given five months of condensed training course as a priority. There are those who are already professionally trained and they should be given a three months refresher training course.

For future, recruitment rules should prescribe training as a basic requirement and strictly adhered to. Those who are untrainable may be reverted, after giving two chances of training, to their respective cadres in states or Central Departments. The deadwood requires to be cleared with a firm hand to rejuvenate the spirits of work in the Board.

The training programme should be promoted in joint cooperation with the schools of social work in respective states. This should include training of the personnel of the Board, both at Central and state levels, as well as the training of the staff of the voluntary agencies getting grants from the Board.

Organisation

As emphasised earlier, to maintain autonomy of the Board, retired High Court or Supreme Court judge, preferably a woman, should be appointed as a full time chairperson. She should be assisted by a full time advisor trained in social development and social work with more than 10 years of professional work experience. He/she be actively associated with planning of activities and training of field workers and supervisors.

The executive secretary of the Board should be drawn from

administrative cadre at the level of a Joint Secretary. He be held squarely responsible for management of work of the Board and its accounts with the help of internal audit system.

The rest of the members of the Board should be drawn from the field of voluntary work more than 10 years of standing. People of high integrity and trust should be selected. Out of the total members, four should be drawn from the profession of social development and welfare with 10 years of experience of work and or in training. Political influence should be minimised as far as possible.

The present composition in number of members of the Board may be continued with advantage.

The state boards, similarly, should have a chairperson of independent opinion and standing with more than 10 years of work in the field and recognised for her contribution to development. She should be given an adviser drawn from the profession of social work.

The Secretary of the State Board should be of the Deputy Secretary level, drawn from the Central service.

Study, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

Professional staff drawn from schools of social work and social science research institutions on deputation should man this division. A nucleus of research staff should work under them. Their major responsibilities would be to plan and conduct field studies on the needs and requirements of social development and welfare with the help of research institutions. Such studies should be promoted in poor marginal communities to enable the Board to develop new programme activities and also to know the impact of its earlier work on welfare of the vulnerable groups of people.

Their major job, however, should be to monitor the programme of work of the Board and to conduct periodic evaluation.

Similar set-up should be provided with the state branches at appropriate level.

Public Education and Public Relation

No amount of constructive work bears fruits without public education and relationship. A systematic programme of public education, and not of the propaganda, of the work of the Board as is done usually in government administration, should be promoted. An extensive programme of seminars, workshops and community discussions among voluntary organisations can create the required atmosphere of social action by voluntary sector. The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development should be actively associated with this programme.

In conclusion, it needs to be emphasised that no amount of

governmental effort, however well intentioned, can bear fruits in improving the field of voluntarism unless the people associated with voluntary organisations examine their own conduct objectively and give up the spirit of possession on the one hand and competition on the other. It needs to be recognised that the younger generation is increasingly losing faith in the voluntary work of their elders and refuse to associate themselves with voluntary welfare activities. This augurs poor for the future of voluntarism in the country.

Social Transformation and Voluntary Agencies : A Model

SNEHALATA PANDA

MAYBE CULTURE is the most important impediment for transformation of traditional societies. The values internalised through the process of transmission for generations are hard to change unless a conducive atmosphere is created by the change-agent. Such an atmosphere is not restricted to the external societal environment but requires an understanding of values and beliefs of individuals and the community. In almost all the underdeveloped countries, the task of transformation is performed by the government. The governmental agencies perform the task through rules and regulations, introduction of new technology and monetary sanctions. It works through officials concerned with statistics rather than the psyche, receptivity, values, beliefs, expectations of the people, and follow-ups to continue the process. This task can be achieved by the voluntary agencies. Their commitment to service will serve as the most effective vehicle for cultural transformation.

Social, economic and political transformation among traditional societies can be effective if their cultural patterns are not hampered, and new value patterns are juxtaposed with the existing culture.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

A group achieves social personality through its culture. It provides a framework of reference and guide to define their collective aspiration and beliefs. Culture creates patterned relationships in the group which is called a structure. Therefore, structures imposed on a particular community without a bearing on the prevailing culture do not function according to expectations.

Culture comprises ideas, values, and behaviour patterns which are supposed to be socially transmittable. In a more restricted sense, it constitutes the "ideational domain" which includes the beliefs, values and expectations of the group. It is a learned behaviour. In

this article, culture is conceptualised as a pattern of living and thinking of a group of people living as a community. These people have adopted their "sociological relations", "spiritual convictions" and "aesthetic tastes" either by force of circumstances or their conscious effort or by both. These distinct patterns of living, thinking and behaviour are presumed to have begun at the beginning of their historical existence. With the passage of time, it underwent change. These changes resulted from external influences affecting the cognitive and evaluative orientation of the group. Therefore, value orientations of the people are not static. It is receptive to change. But the effectiveness of the change depends on the ability of the change-agent to juxtapose the tradition and modernity and to dislodge outworn values and internalise the new ones.

Culture is dynamic in the sense that it receives new cultures and transforms itself on the basis of receptivity. But external influences can not bring about substantial change, if the core culture of beliefs, aspirations and convictions are not taken into account. It is, however, very difficult to understand the core culture. Sometimes, even the concerned groups are unaware of it. Therefore, before orienting to new values, it is desirable on the part of the change-agent to understand the core culture and trace the inhibiting factors. This will help the change-agent in creating a feeling of potentiality of their culture among the people and at the same time widen their outlook.

Features of Culture

The features of culture may be summarised as: (1) systemic, (2) learned, and (3) dynamic.

Systemic--Beliefs, values and expectations of the people are patterned systemically basing on which the concerned people determine "what is appropriate or inappropriate relating to their life situation".

Learned--Beliefs, values and expectations are learned. Contact with other cultures and people help to assimilate the properties judged by the community to be appropriate. Even individuals can discriminate the right and wrong, thereby making room for differences in the more generalised cultural pattern.

Dynamic--Beliefs, values and expectations are not static but dynamic. These are adaptable to change, retaining the core values which are considered very important, and assimilating those features considered to be beneficial. But the nature and the rate of change is not uniform in all cultures. Some cultures change their belief system quickly whereas others do not. Even during the olden days,

when contacts were limited, there is evidence of exchange of cultural values. Now, with opportunities for wider contact, there is frequent exchange of cultures. The process was hastened during colonisation of the eastern hemisphere. These interactions have produced a chain of changes. This process has not ceased ever since.

Orissa experienced unique cultural assimilation during the British rule. Islam pervaded Orissan society but did not affect its core values. Similarly, the British rulers enforced their administration, education and law. Still the society remained unaffected in its core values. The great reformation that was pioneered during the 17th and 18th centuries, however, drastically changed the social structure of Orissa. But these changes were not uniform throughout the state. In regions, where people were more receptive to points judged to be appropriate for assimilation, the traditional pattern of beliefs and values changed. But in regions, where the receptivity was late and low, the traditional orientations still existed. Hence, any attempt for social transformation requires an understanding of the beliefs, values and expectations of the people.

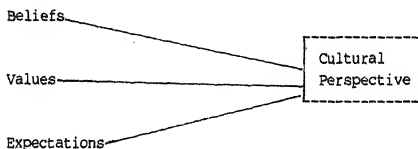


FIG. 1 ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY'S CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Terminological Clarification

Belief

Beliefs are faith of the people on some inanimate and animate objects as existing or true. It includes a person's trust and faith that certain types of people, spirits, thoughts, animate and inanimate objects and process--such as changes, learning, development, death, spiritual growth or rejection--exist and are true principles which do or should guide behaviour. Beliefs also suggest relations, some of which are cause-effect relationships, among people things and processes. Social scientists have stated causal relations in different cultures in their belief between animate and inanimate objects. Even the belief in developed and underdeveloped countries, the capacity to absorb and internalise are also belief systems which are prevailing in the present-day industrial world.

Values

Values fix up the appropriateness or inappropriateness about people and objects. This is the most basic element of culture. Other elements of culture are derivations of this core feature. The 'receptivity' and capacity to absorb nature and duration of change are dependent on the value orientations of a cultural group.

Expectations

Expectations are estimations of reality and imply the anticipation of behaviour most likely to occur; if certain circumstances are created and put into action, individuals expect certain kinds of favour from other individuals in various role relationships'. The expectation from a religious leader will be different from that of a social worker or a teacher. Expectations from a social worker will be different from that of a government official. Popular authorities and organisations are under constant evaluation according to the expectations of the people. When people become familiar with behaviour patterns and frame rules for appropriate behaviour, they have in mind what ought to be the appropriate behaviour in different situations. The expectations of all the people in a particular community are not alike. It varies according to the level of education, nature of learning, income and occupation, age, degree of self concept, etc.

TRANSFORMATION AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Changes initiated in one sphere will affect others. Broadly, this refers to socio-economic and cultural transformation in the cultural group under study. This results from a planned development process implemented by government and non-governmental agencies. The output of the process registers a marked improvement in the economic status of the people. The degree of improvement is dependent on the receptivity to innovations and wider access and intelligent use of available resources. Societies under transition, rapidly move forward to achieve new ends. These ends carry new values which were absent in the traditional society. Voluntary organisations play a major role in organising people to achieve the new ends. They reveal cultural values that were unknown to the community in transition. The programme to successfully achieve these ends are formulated by the voluntary organisations. Their role in re-orientation of the community in new value patterns for achieving new ends are, therefore, of immense importance.

In the transitional stage, new roles and relationships in the socio-economic and political structures emerge. Voluntary

organisations help not only in creating these roles and relationships but also in socialising the people in values that these roles and relations require. Voluntary associations, therefore, develop ways of honouring the people they think worthy; the over-elaborate system of ranks serves as a means of differentiating the relative merit of members and of giving indigenous character of values obtained from the new influences. Developments in the physical environment are inadequate for transformation as the people have not internalised the new values that are attached to these. A feeling of insecurity pervades the community due to dislodging of existing values. As a change-agent, voluntary organisations can instil a sense of security through a gradual process of socialising the community in transition.

Effecting the Change

The physical environment is the external environmental setting in which the community is located. Apart from the geographical setting, it includes the pattern of relationships in the community, their socio-economic, religious and political structures. An understanding of the structure gives an idea about the culture, i.e., the value orientations. The value environment includes the beliefs, concepts, ideas and expectations, which are common and persistent with the group. This helps in drawing a boundary of differentiation of the group with others. The physical environment has both positive aspects as well as negative aspects. (For example, the positive ideals in Orissan society, like community feeling, self-help, etc., and negative aspects, like taboos and harmful customs). The positive aspects are to be reinforced and utilised by the change-agent. The negative aspects are to be discouraged till the community is convinced that they are harmful and outdated. This is to be done in three stages of the learning process, namely: (i) cognitive, (ii) affectative, and (iii) evaluative.

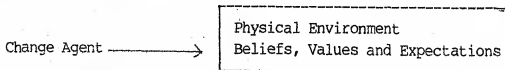


FIG. 2 A MODEL FOR SOCIETAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT AND VALUE ORIENTATIONS

Introducing the Concept of Change

In order to ensure effective development, the change-agent has to introduce the community concerned to the idea and concept of change. They are to be explained the 'why' and 'what' of the transformation

that has been proposed to be brought about. The people are to be explained why the change is needed, why some old ideas are to be reformed or given up? What actually are the ideas that are to be given up? What ideas and institutions in the traditional culture inhibit change and how new developments are going to help them?

In order to create an awareness, the change-agent must: (i) reiterate the positive effects of changes, (ii) emphasise on the negative aspects, and (iii) compare the new ones with the old.

The positive aspects about health care, family planning, use of improved tools for agriculture, new types of occupation, community spirit, value of education are to be emphasised. In order to create faith in them, values which were deterrent in the old culture are to be compared with the gains in the new culture. The positive aspects will not create a lasting impact if the negative aspects will not be magnified. The evils of a large family, illiteracy, health hazard, absence of medical check-up, early marriage, etc., are the negative aspects, magnification of which will develop their sense of judgement.

Distracting the community from the age-old practices, ideas and values is not an easy task. This has to be done through comparison and contrast between the traditional cultural norms and practices and the newly introduced ones. It is not that results will be achieved instantly. The change-agent should be aware that this is a very delicate and sensitive area. Therefore, more than the methods of imparting the new and useful concepts and eliminating the old and harmful ones, it requires patience and perseverance.

Their understanding will be quick and easier, if faith in the change-agent is created at the very outset. The community must not feel that the agency working for them has different habits and behaviour. Hence, the change-agent has to go down to that stage first and then bring them up to the desired level of development.

Acceptability Factor

The next stage to be followed is to know their feelings and attitudes. Learning is a continuous process. In this process, certain beliefs and behaviour are given up while some new ones are acquired. Even at the cognitive stage, if efforts are made to make them understand new ideas, they may not be totally accepted. Understanding the idea does not make it acceptable. This is very difficult to achieve as it involves giving up the beliefs tenaciously clung to. Not only the old beliefs are to be discarded, but the people have also to reorient their outlook. Thus, not consulting the village quack, taking preventives for immunisations, using improved agricultural technology, dismantling the hierarchical social structure, etc., are

not only to be understood but also to be accepted. Acceptance requires change of outlook.

While resistance (to change) appears in all ages, it usually becomes more pronounced as we grow older. Older persons generally have less opportunity and time to get the things they feel they need. Consequently, they must hold to what they have. This has to be taken note of while dealing with people of various age-groups.

Attitude formation follows understanding through comparison between the existing and the newly introduced developmental concepts and equipment. The positive feeling towards innovation and negative feeling towards the existing cultural mores are to be emphasised by the change-agent. The community's receptivity to innovations will be understood, if majority of them will be inclined towards these. This will indicate that the new values are internalised and they are satisfied with the positive outcome.

While giving up the old and accepting the new, a sense of insecurity pervades the people. The old was already internalised with which they were familiar. The new was never known and felt. The feeling of insecurity deters them from taking up and utilising the innovations. This attitude is more perceptible among the older people. Hence, attempts to change attitude has to begin with dislodging the feeling of insecurity and creating a sense of satisfaction. The latter can be assessed from their eagerness and enthusiasm to learn about the new.

This can be achieved again by the same methods of comparison of positive feelings towards the beneficial effects and reiterating the feelings towards the negative effects of the existing beliefs and values. The value of cooperation, community feeling, self-help, etc., can be emphasised upon for bettering their living standard. A better living from the use of developed technology and changing occupation, limited family, etc., will create a feeling of satisfaction. In rural communities, week days are spent in togetherness in the village market. This time and place can be selected for imparting new values and technology. Gradually this can be systematised.

Evaluation

The third stage is achieved when there is a perceptible change in the behaviour of the people. Behaviour change ensures a change in the total external environment, where the understanding and feeling are merged. A positive feeling in the individual makes him act according to the newly learned values. A positive idea, as understood, leads to a positive feeling and attitude, which makes the individual accept the idea as something worthwhile to work on. This kind of action, when pursued with enthusiasm, leads

to fuller realisation of the idea. Figuratively this can be stated as follows:

Positive idea ----> Positive attitude ----> Behaviour

When a group is motivated to action in order to change for the better, it looks for the results. Results will be at the desired direction and degree, if correct 'inputs' are used in the form of new skills and technology. These are not pre-existing. Therefore, they are to be innovated sufficiently ahead of time. Systematic planning and evaluation too are absent in the existing culture. These are to be infused in the existing culture. At the same time, the positive aspects of the existing and new ideas will lead to positive consequences. These inputs will, therefore, determine the outputs. Replication of the technique will yield better results.

STRATEGY OF CHANGE

Techniques

The change initiated follows a course where the ideas and tools are amalgamated harmoniously. Systematic reinforcement of values will not yield desired results unless tools befitting the community are employed. Innovation of tools requires an understanding of the socio-economic and political dynamics of the community. The forces that interact with the community value pattern are multifarious. They affect each other or a number of factors. Therefore, the external and internal forces interacting at all levels of the group are to be completely understood by the change-agent for developing tools and strategy.

The direction of change must be patiently watched. The group should be allowed to take time to internalise the values. This is time-consuming as there is a feeling of insecurity in dislodging the old and internalising the new. This sense must be perceived. Therefore, in order to integrate the community with the new value patterns, the change-agent must allow enough time. Gradual change is lasting and follows complete integration.

This can be achieved easily if the change-agent is perceived one among the group who has sincere desire for transformation. A feeling of alienation towards the agent of change and the techniques will create disintegration. The folk media is widely used in some stages for creating awareness among the people. This can be used by the

change-agent for creating awareness.

Implementation

In order to achieve effective transformation with all round development, the work programme should have an appropriate methodology. The size and allocation of the group of people has to be worked out first. They have to be approached with a programme just enough for their needs. Any thing less or more would be counter-productive. Then the attempt should be made with an appropriate methodology to penetrate the cultural environment. The folk medias are adjudged to be the best. Stories delineating the negative aspects of the existing value patterns ending with positive aspects of the newly introduced values can be depicted through folk medias. They have immense potentiality in sensitising the people. After the display, a thorough analysis of the scene can be made through participation of the whole group.

An ideal situation can be created by the change-agent for the group. They would then compare their existing situation with the ideal one. The desired points in order of priority can be listed by the group itself. The missing points in their existing culture pattern can be located by this process. Thereafter, appropriate areas can be located for altering their situation. For example, a voluntary agency, working for reforming sex discrimination in a community, can create an ideal situation where egalitarian cultural values are respected. This can be depicted through a folk media, like a 'street play'. This is least expensive. The ideal and the existing can be compared through a content analysis of both the value patterns. Then, with the approval of the group, resources can be worked out to sensitise the whole group. The group will not feel alienated from the whole programme as it will be totally involved from the beginning till the end of the process. Creating awareness about the newly evolved culture is time consuming and difficult. In order to socialise the community in the new values, the change-agent must categorise them into certain broad areas. For example, they may be classified basing on societal and inter-personal relation, social interaction, health, sanitation, and income generation and arranged in order of priority. The whole community has to arrange them and then planning should be made to solve them after sorting out the problem areas. Here, again, the method of comparison and contrast is to be followed where negative aspects are to be eliminated and positive aspects reiterated.

Approach

The following is a model for approach towards transforming the

community by the change-agent:

1. Understand the culture in its historical perspective;
2. Study the culture as it is prevailing;
3. Discover the system of values as prevailing;
4. Make explicit the experience that has been gained after the study of prevailing values and beliefs;
5. Reflect on the meaning of each experience;
6. Relate it to the general situation as well as the history of the situation;
7. Consideration of each experience in its totality, i.e., taking into consideration the experience of others as well;
8. Acquisition of the notion of sight as well as insight; and
9. Checking and modifying the insight after ascertaining the feeling of others in the community.

In the context of the Orissan society, the scheme, given in Table 1, could be considered very near the cultural context.

After categorising the existing and expected values, the change-agent has to act as follows:

1. Discover the socialisation process and study the ways of value transmission by parents to male and female children.
2. Discover how these values are carried over the socio-economic and political structure of the society.
3. Discover areas where change can be speedier and effective.
4. Authenticate assumed aspects of the value system by constant reflection, discussion, communication and contact.
5. Find out ways of conflict resolution and management in traditional value system and how this can be used to achieve the expected goal.
6. Locate persons with commitment in the community and enlist their support, realise their experience and activity for achieving the expected goal.

To emphasise that if society exists for men, then it must fulfil the self-actualisation needs of men. If few men benefit from the economic, social, cultural and political institutions and patterns of relationship, then that has to be changed.

Human beings are receptive to change only when the change is supported by the external environment. When this is possible, positive gains will flow from the new values and people will support the change. But this will be a gradual process. It will be judged to be effective if it penetrates the whole community. The presence of

Table 1 SCHEME FOR CLASSIFICATION OF VALUES

Historical Values	Values Operating	Desirable Values
Caste dominance	Decreased dominance of Caste	Egalitarian Society
Class dominance	Class dominance	Occupational mobility
Subordination of Women	Subordination of Women	
Distaste for occupational mobility	Occupational mobility and Urban migration	Smooth inter-personal relation
Patriarchical structure of society	Emulation of Western forms	Technological advancement
Belief in external forces	Uncritical imitation	Amalgamation of tradition and modernity
Low involvement in political activity	Decreasing belief in external forces	Critical attitude towards imbibed values
Low level of literacy	Educated elite alienated from the majority	Mutual help and Democracy
Religiosity	Feeling of insecurity, individualistic attitude and social conflict	Economic security and self self reliance

supportive groups in the community will facilitate transformation. Effective mobilisation, creation of awareness, organisation and social action will lead to achievement of desired goal if the change-agent has commitment and sincerity of purpose.

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Challenge and Opportunity for Voluntarism in Rural Development

J.S. MEHTA

FUNDAMENTALLY THE problem of voluntarism is the dichotomy between the moral impulse of the social conscience and the political concept of a Social Contract embodied in a modern democratic state. Both have their respective legitimacy; the strength of the former is in activist sensitivity and the latter in the power it wields. The question is whether they are inherently and irreconcilably in conflict or can they evolve a mutually respecting partnership to jointly serve the shared goals of social transformation and equitable national progress. In an authoritarian political system, voluntary social action is banished into illegitimacy and in consequence often resorts to insurgency. In a democracy, the citizen is not only guaranteed rights but also carries obligations to the nation's collective welfare. Voluntarism, in a free society, draws its inspiration from the concept of social justice, which is enshrined in universal values and the manifold declarations on Human Rights. Our own constitutional directive lays down that "a social order in which justice--social, economic and political must--inform national life". The full scope for citizen action for equal opportunity and equitable share of benefits has obvious political imperatives but, first and last, voluntary involvement in development reflects an individual's quiet zest to move the mountain of social injustice and patiently plough a lonely furrow for a greener and more productive landscape.

What starts with an individual urge for the redressal of want and social inequities, inevitably leads on to problems of broadening the reach of voluntary action through institution building, creating organisational structures and finding resources and collaborators to meet the locally determined grassroots priorities. In the process, voluntary organisations (Volags) come up against entrenched orthodoxy and political conservatism, which are reflected in the laws of the land even in a democratically elected government.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CHALLENGES

Last year, a thoughtful and informed debate took place on enlarging the scope and removing the hurdles confronting the Volags. There was a broad consensus that in all fields of social change and development, voluntary institutions must preserve their identity, distinct from government and different from the corporate life of the country, but it was recognised that they have a specially important role in the unorganised rural sector. The vast majority of people live in dispersed villages and, therefore, have been inherently handicapped to receive and wrest attention in the face of the bias of the industrial and urban dominated establishment. Both the enormity of problems of rural India and the negative empire of circumstances, which have given it inadequate focus, must be comprehended so that a new kind of cooperative relationship between independent rural voluntarism and the powerful modern state can be created. The challenge is both external as well as of internal discipline for the Volags themselves.

Let me first mention the external factors. It is generally conceded by social scientists that, contrary to what growth economists prophesied, even after three decades of planned development, an equitable share of benefits and distributive justice have not trickled down to the marginalised section of the rural poor. It was fallacious to have assumed that restructuring society on a socialistic pattern implied that the burden of development and social transformation could be wholly consigned to the state. The welcome change is that government, intellectual elite, and development economists, each in their own way, have come to accept that meaningful progress, particularly in the unorganised rural sector, will require vigorous participation of the afflicted themselves.

Recent declarations at the highest level have had a more earnest emphasis on the grassroots involvement of the people, specially in new priorities, like wasteland reclamation and ecological restitution. The infamous Kudal Commission, which was investigating voluntary agencies, has been finally wound up. For the first time, in the Seventh Five-Year Plan, funds have been earmarked for allocations to non-governmental agencies. The dynamic head of a well-known voluntary organisation was appointed adviser to the Planning Commission to underline the expectations that the voluntary sector should be entrusted with a greater role in national development.

But such affirmations notwithstanding, one must not overlook that past political attitudes towards Volags have swung between positive encouragement, condescending toleration and outright hostility. Doubts about the capability and potential were reflected in years of

benign neglect. Where economic stagnation got exposed by voluntary activism, political indifference tended to turn into deep suspicion and even malevolence. When Volags seemed to be coalescing behind a powerful leadership, many of them suffered disabilities and suppression. The voluntary sector is inherently and specially vulnerable to what Galbraith calls condign power--the power to coerce and discipline against suspected threats to self-interest and present prerogatives of authority. The bureaucracy at some levels gives positive encouragement to effective grassroots organisations but officialdom all too frequently, in knee-jerk reaction, finds Volags as irritating challenges to their domains of discretion.

This ambivalence between encouragement and reservations towards the voluntary sector were evident when a draft bill to constitute a council of rural voluntary agencies was circulated last year. The purpose, it was explained, was to enlarge the scope for voluntary effort and to provide for redressal and protection, specially against the abuse of governmental authority. The bill also included a suggested code of conduct (ethics) for voluntary organisations which embodied commendable provisions for commitment to poverty eradication, accountability, professionalism, socialism, and austerity. It was, however, left unclear whether registration under the act was envisaged as essential before being assigned responsibilities in the execution of governmental programmes and the right to receive foreign contributions.

While taking note of the declared purpose, many voluntary organisations were quick to question, individually and in conclaves, whether such a statutory body, with an enforceable code of behaviour, did not negate the fundamental rationale of citizen freedom for constructive endeavour. The existing laws governing the registration of societies and the Foreign Contribution Act already give the Central and state governments the power of scrutiny and the prevention of financial and other abuses. The addition of powers under the enactment, it was feared, could be used by the government or their successors to discriminate arbitrarily and in the process either co-opt the more pliable or curb and undermine the more autonomous Volags. A deliberate reorientation of the conventional attitudes in the political echelons and the pyramid of officialdom will be essential, if purposeful cooperation and mutual confidence between government and non-governmental organisations is to be fashioned. But there is a danger of escapism to argue that the absence of such a sea-change is a paralysing obstruction to voluntary action.

PROBLEMS OF FUNDING

There is a long history and great diversity of charity and social service in India. Many voluntary bodies, in the social and economic life of contemporary India, draw their inspiration from spiritual and religious underpinnings (Hindu, Christian, Jain, Muslim or Parsee, etc.). There are also secular organisations, some avowedly Marxist, which are impelled by universal human values and concern for social justice. All of them get support from the respect for compassion, self-denying sacrifice and service to the fellow beings which is part of the ancient culture and value system in India's heritage. The great boost and inspiration for voluntarism must be traced to the advent and impact of Gandhiji in our national life. While leading a mass movement for political freedom, he drew on the religious value system and insisted that political liberation must go hand in hand with a sense of social responsibility and in banishing untouchability and regenerating the village economies. He anticipated the limitations and social distortions of macro-economic planning and rampant industrialisation. Gandhiji is now looked upon not just as the prophet of decentralisation and village level economic self-reliance, but the inspiration for meeting the ecological disaster and human degradation brought about by modern industrial civilisation.

The development professionals are not necessarily convinced of the Gandhian approach. But as social scientists, in their search for alternative strategies for development with distributive justice, they too have come round to urge a grassroots upwards thrust. In this reoriented emphasis, the developmental professional seems at times to be drawing inspiration from the effective activism of NGOs in the affluent democracies. But the problems of voluntarism in a poor agricultural country are very different to those in the West. The Volags here are necessarily weaker, more fragmented and specially dispersed. Moreover they cannot bank on adequate support of private philanthropy and are obliged to rely largely on institutional funding for their constructive programmes. There are, of course, some long established Gandhian organisations and a few other dedicated groups, and individual idealists who take no aid from any source and are sustained wholly with community backing. But most Volags, directly or indirectly, wholly or partially, are perforce obliged to seek governmental support. But when executing official programmes, they run up against exacting bureaucratic procedures and accounting requirements and in the process their developmental thrust gets weakened.

It was the absence or limitations of domestic institutional funding which led to the spurt of foreign supports for Volags. Such

foreign support from non-national sources comes under strict regulation. Much of it originates from non-governmental agencies of small or medium-sized countries, like Canada, Scandinavia, Netherlands, Federal Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland and international agencies, like UNICEF or OXFAM. As a rule, the motivations behind such funding flows from a sensitive concern for poverty in the global village and cannot be faulted for ulterior purposes or prescribing demeaning conditions. (At home, most of these donor agencies are activists for peace, disarmament and enlightened international transfer of resources.) But even so, exclusive or excessive dependence on foreign institutional funding is debilitating and invites suspicions of external manipulation. Whether funding is domestic or external, voluntary agencies have to be specially vigilant to maintain the highest standards of integrity and, at all times, be transparently accountable and open to scrutiny.

It is worth noting that the well-reputed Volags in India were native in their origin and resource base. As a rule, institutional funding sought them out not the other way round. Compared to most developing countries, voluntarism in India demonstrates greater vitality with scores of pockets of solid achievement. Across the length and breadth of the country, there are some 7,000--by some accounts 100,000--small and medium-sized voluntary organisations, many working in remote backward and tribal areas. But even so, it is estimated that Volags only cover 20,000 out of 5,50,000 villages in the country. The reach of the voluntary sector in rural development is not expanding when compared to its obvious need and scope. Recognising this, recently, select leaders in the voluntary sector, supported by a paragovernmental institution (CAPART), have been canvassing for a Common Action Programme (CAP) to attract educated youth, more particularly women, to join and extend citizen action for development and social justice. Such well-intentioned campaigns may recruit some foot soldiers but the leaders, the institution builders and the trail blazers of Volags, who will push the frontiers of voluntary action to the vast neglected rural hinterland, will only be found from amongst self-impelled volunteers.

The more difficult problem for voluntary organisations is not in relation to government or donors, but internal to the organisations themselves. Voluntarism, which starts with individual motivation, predicates higher values and self-imposed discipline. Volags must function democratically in programming, but they must not allow this attitude to overlook the imperative of public accountability. They must be vigilant against factionalism. It would be pretentious to claim that Volags are inoculated against corruption. The need for financial prudence and disciplined work ethics, which necessitates an

organisational framework, can also degenerate into individual or institutional authoritarianism. Finding the right mix is a difficult challenge to ensure sustained vitality for Volags. To guard against such perils, it is always instructive to recall the high-minded founders of voluntary organisations and treat them as the moral lodestars. They exemplified the spirit of dedication, the total rejection of ulterior ambitions and monetary gratification, and so carved respect for voluntary activism.

OTHER MAJOR PROBLEMS

But the ordinary run of supporting personnel in the voluntary sector are bound to be a mixed lot in quality and motivation. The lure of security and prestige associated with service with government and the envy of earnings in the corporate sector, siphons off much of the meritocracy away from grassroots organisation. Not that those, who come forward to join the Volags under economic pressures of unemployment, are necessarily incapable of adjusting to the ethos of Volags. But the voluntary organisations have to be reconciled to providing living wages and upgrade them to keep up with creeping inflation. The more pernicious influence on the Volags comes from the environment of consumerism, corruption, moral degeneration and the social ascendancy of the unprincipled. As in politics, the posture of higher public virtue and a romanticised idealism of public service is almost a professional hazard and psychological necessity in voluntarism. In fact, and not surprisingly, mirroring the prevalent social environment of voluntarism provides cover for subjective ambitions, career building, and quest for public recognition but these exist side by side with wholly sincere commitment to social service without expectations of the conventional rewards. It can be asserted that any survey of Volags will show hundreds of highly motivated men and women, some retired and others educated and professionally qualified youth who have rejected other opportunities, and have tethered themselves to grassroots voluntary organisations.

To enhance the bargaining power of Volags, efforts are underway to build various kinds of collective lobbies and a united front of the voluntary sector. Some tentative initiatives were restricted to organisations engaged in a specific sector, like wasteland development or adult education. Other proposals envisage the incorporation of representatives of every kind of voluntary organisations in a national or state-wide forum. Such ideas have gathered support but, in concept and feasibility, they have remained bedevilled with built-in difficulties. People-based organisations, by definition, are localised and are bound to be diverse in priorities and approach. A

coalition of Volags could more readily be catalysed around a specific issue or an imminent common threat, but this might be short-lived. While Volags are understandably on guard to preserve their separate identities, they are not above competing with each other for funds or trained workers or poaching and piggybacking on the work of other voluntary organisations. Further, unwittingly, they can be tempted to flatter the corporate sector by imitation, by tending towards gigantism and dog-eat-dog propensities, which are legitimate as modalities and measures of success in the market economy, but are repugnant to voluntarism. With such complexities, forging even a loose confederation of voluntary organisation which would enhance credibility of the sector as a whole is not going to be easy. Success would require, as a precondition, greater flexibility to subscribe to a common allegiance and combine it with genuine mutual respect for each other. Voluntarism must be grounded in a firm faith in plurality and adherence to a voluntarily determined code of conduct. What needs to be reiterated is that even without such a countervailing power, the opportunity of inching progress in grassroots confidence-building is not necessarily doomed.

Another institutional problem for Volags is to graft relevant technology, managerial talent and professional skills to catalyse faster progress in the rural sector. Many institutions, including a Rural Management Academy, are addressing themselves to this problem imaginatively. Even so, in general, graduates in rural management or agricultural engineering are understandably reluctant to live and work for long years in the villages. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that more and more motivated professionals are coming forward to make careers in the voluntary sector. When inducting qualified personnel, one has to be on guard that the emoluments of professionals (even if less than those of their peers in the corporate sector) do not lead to widening the alienating gulf from the village poor. There could also be friction with the typical grassroots worker who is less educated but a better communicator and catalyst for confidence-building at the people's level. Similarly, innovative new models, which are built with concentrated technical and capital inputs, have to be constantly assessed against the touch-stone of whether they could be replicated by the people themselves. If this is not obviated, it could only reinforce the old habit of psychological dependence amongst the rural poor. In building the capacity of indigenous absorption of new strategies, the resident grassroot worker and the development professional have to find ways to forge a harmonious compact so that they can jointly determine the modalities and pace in grassroots-upward development.

Finally, there is the difficult question of the attitude of Volags

in rural development to conventional politics. In a democracy, political parties have a legitimate right to marshal the people to their particular persuasion through party cells. There has emerged the idea of a coalition of grassroots organisations forming a broad nationwide non-party 'political' front for social justice as an alternative development strategy. But Volags, who straddle social and developmental goals on the one hand with preferences in electoral politics on the other, must be prepared for the unsavoury games of the political market place. If a Volag is perceived as identified with or opposed to a political party, it could come under competitive pressures. If the grassroots strength is unshakeable and collateral outside support can give it staying power, a strong Volag can win in a confrontation against established authority on specific issues and even deepen its hold amongst the people. In brief, every voluntary agency, after carefully determining its own strength and priorities, will require careful helmsmanship to steer through political eddies and storms so that collective solidarity and interests of the poor are not damaged. All this underlines that outside involvement in promoting voluntarism carries serious responsibilities and patient long-term commitment to bring about rural regeneration.

These are difficult problems in the odyssey of voluntarism. There can be no firm answers but there is need to reflect on the conceptual approach and the specific dilemmas. I myself do so with limited experience and superficial insights. What can be confidently affirmed is that in a poor country like India, the challenge and the scope for social and developmental goals through collateral voluntary effort is boundless. The strength and value of Volags must not be measured merely by the macro-economic calculus. In the final instance, one must end where one began: voluntary action flows from a sensitive conscience and demands sustained dedication. The catalogues of possible impediments are sometimes imaginary or irrelevant and only occasionally insuperable. Voluntarism can hold its own and even thrive if there is the mental fortitude to ply the lonely furrow in a vast parched landscape towards a distant horizon of the social and economic liberation of the land.

SEVA MANDIR

Seva Mandir was established with the faith that shoring democracy and achieving true economic and social liberation will require citizen involvement and heightened social responsibility. Seva Mandir eschews party politics but it does not shy away from supporting the people on specific issues involving civic rights, social disabilities, denial of justice under the law and in demanding a

fairer share of development resources for the rural poor. We have 125 whole-time workers and several hundred village collaborators covering 400 villages, spread in pockets over several thousand square kilometres of a rugged, unusually depressed area which is threatened with ecological doom. Seva Mandir is purposefully but gingerly engaged in all aspects of rural problems. But we are not complacent about our success and not unaware that all manner of inner problems and external hurdles will continuously beset us. We know we would need institutional self-discipline, and a measure of rectitude amongst the workers at all levels to stay the course for a long long march. We also know that we will falter if we betray the trust of the people with whom we work and we will certainly fail if we lose faith. Eventual success and satisfaction will only come when we can see the growth of confidence in the people's capacity to economic self-reliance so that one day we may become redundant.

Role of Voluntary Organisations in Rural Development

H.R. CHATURVEDI

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS have played a significant role in rural development, for centuries, in India. Of course, this role has changed from time to time, depending on development needs of rural society and the role played by other institutions to meet these needs. For instance, in pre-independent India, voluntary organisations had set up educational institutions, Ashram Shalas, and built hospitals to meet the needs of remote rural areas. They had also built a network of institutions catering to the needs of the society and its physically and mentally deprived and disadvantaged groups. Apart from that, they mobilised resources for creating common facilities for all sections of the society, such as drinking water, planting of trees, building and maintenance of roads and inns, temples, reading rooms and libraries, etc. Likewise, the Gandhian workers had spread through the length and breadth of the country to organise what was called 'constructive work' for all-round development of the rural society. But this role has substantially changed, in the post-independent India, with government directly assuming lot of responsibility for initiating, organising and managing welfare and development programmes.

GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

Although, born out of his quest for political freedom of India, Gandhi had most comprehensive concept of development, covering all aspects of life, such as social, political, economic, cultural and spiritual. His main emphasis was on rural society. He said, "If India is not to perish, we have to begin with the lower rung of ladder. If that was rotten, all work done at the top or at the intermediate rungs was bound to ultimately fall".¹ His vision of rural development was building a self-supporting, self-governing and self-reliant village community where everybody's needs were met and the people lived in harmony and cooperation. In brief, he

comprehended a village community, the basis of which was political autonomy 'swaraj', and non-exploitation.² The salient features of his constructive programme were 'charkha' (spinning wheel), 'khadi' (hand woven cloth), 'gramodyog' (village industries), 'basic education', 'sanitation', and eradication of untouchability. In brief, he favoured building of a society which offered equal opportunities to all individuals for educational, economic and social development. Essentially, it was a model of a society based on values of non-violence, justice and freedom.

During the freedom struggle, a large band of dedicated workers inspired and influenced by Gandhi took to constructive work and made it their life's mission and spread throughout the country. He founded several organisations to consolidate and carry forward various programmes. For example, he founded Harijan Sevak Sangh (association for the service of untouchables), Gramodyog Sangh (association for promotion of village industries), and Hindustan Talim Sangh (association for the education of Hindustani). Although many of these organisations lost their vigour, fervor and dynamism in course of time and folded up, but some of them have retained their existence and have continued to work to build India of Gandhi's dream. Some individuals, who were associated with these organisations, joined the government some other got involved with institutions set up by the government, like Khadi and Village Industries Board. Some well known Gandhians dedicated themselves to a new movement of Bhoodan (land gift) and Gramdan (village gift). Vinoba Bhave was the chief architect of this movement. He really built a powerful movement which at one time had shown a great promise for a peaceful transformation of the rural society. It was a unique movement of its kind, which succeeded in land gifts of lakhs of acres. But it became weak and lost its appeal before it could have its impact on social and economic life in the countryside. But this certainly was a unique example of voluntary initiative of such a size, with far-reaching consequences, anywhere in the world.

Despite Gandhi's towering personality and his influence, the Congress Party in general and Nehru--the chief architect of free India--in particular, showed a radical departure from his conception regarding rural development policies and programmes. With the launching of various programmes, the role of voluntary organisations radically changed. These changes were necessitated by a variety of factors.

VOLUNTARY ACTION IN POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA--FIRST PHASE

With the launching of a major Community Development programme, for

all-round development of the countryside, the voluntary organisations had to re-examine and redefine their role. In a way, this was inevitable as the government launched a massive relief, rehabilitation, welfare and development programme, which was the main preoccupation of voluntary organisations prior to independence.

Secondly, the main responsibility of implementing Community Development programmes devolved on the bureaucracy and voluntary organisations had a marginal or supplementary role at best.

Thirdly, the voluntary organisations had to think of a new role in view of the creation of the Central Social Welfare Board, in 1953, to assist and promote voluntary organisations, specially engaged in catering to the needs of women and children. The Board directly sponsored Welfare Extension projects for rural areas. Each project was to cover an area of about 25 to 30 villages and a population of about 20,000. The programmes envisaged were setting up of Balwadi (community creches and pre-basic schools), maternity and infant health services (including those for the handicapped and the delinquents), spreading of literacy and social education for women, and promoting arts and crafts centres and recreational activities.

Fourthly, as development programmes were initiated by several government departments and ministries, they depended on voluntary organisations for designing and executing programmes and for training personnel at various levels for effectively running the same. For instance, the Ministry of Community Development involved voluntary organisations to organise and conduct training programmes for extension workers. Likewise, the Ministry of Health assigned training of health workers to some such organisations. The Ministry of Education involved a number of voluntary organisations engaged in education in its programme of rural higher education. In the initial phase, ten institutions, engaged in rural higher education, were selected in different parts of the country. Some of the noted institutions in this list were, Lok Bharati, Sanosara, Gujarat; Mauni Vidyapeeth, Gargoti, Kolhapur, Maharashtra; Gandhigram, Madurai, Tamil Nadu; Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu; Balwant Rajput College, Bichpuri, Agra, Uttar Pradesh; Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute, Udaipur, Rajasthan; Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; and Rural Institute, Amravati, Maharashtra. These institutions were set up to design, develop and promote education, befitting the needs and requirements of the rural society, in the changing context of technological and scientific advancement. Apart from education, these institutions were also involved in designing, organising and conducting training programmes to meet the requirements of other ministries.

Gains and Set-Backs

Some of the developments stated above had a far-reaching impact on the voluntary organisations and changed their very nature and character. These changes had both positive as well as negative impact on the growth of voluntary organisations. Some of the gains of voluntary organisations could be listed as under:

1. Voluntary organisations which were stagnating and, in some cases, almost languishing for want of financial resources for a long time, found a new lease of life with the flow of funds from the government.
2. With the flow of funds, some of these organisations could expand and diversify their activities and grow in size. It became possible for them to take up new challenges arising out of the hopes and aspirations raised by the newly formed national government. With the availability of additional financial resources, these institutions could cater to larger areas both in terms of geographical space and clientele groups.
3. Some of the voluntary organisations took to intermediary role between the government and the people. In this role, they could provide an effective link between the government and the people, thereby enabling them to make effective use of the available services. This surely was crucial because the bureaucracy could not easily reach out to remote countryside and also it could not easily inspire confidence in the people, whose memories were fresh about repression and atrocities that were inflicted on them.
4. The voluntary organisations operating at the field level had the first-hand feel of the community response to the existing programmes and also of the growing needs of the people. They could, therefore, provide much-needed feedback for modifying and changing the existing programmes or for formulating new policies and programmes suiting to their needs. Thus, voluntary organisations had a crucial role in helping the government in formulating relevant policies and programmes.
5. The voluntary organisations succeeded in attracting enterprising youth to the rural development work as their base expanded with the growth of various programmes launched after Independence. These institutions provided a training ground for these workers which was greatly needed due to sudden spurt in the welfare and development programmes initiated in the countryside.

On the other hand, voluntary organisations had a serious setback in the changed situation. Not only their growth was stunted but in some ways their popular base also got weakened with their growing dependence on government support. Some of the most important points that need a mention in this context are as under:

1. With the flow of funds from government sources, the voluntary organisations became increasingly dependent on their aids and assistance. In fact, in many cases their dependence on government aid increased considerably and they gradually abandoned their efforts to raise funds through public donations and contributions. Consequently, popular support for voluntary work declined considerably as also people's involvement and interests in their activities. This serious setback weakened their very foundations and defeated the purpose of their existence.
2. Voluntary organisations gradually shifted their emphasis and concentration on programmes for which aid and assistance was available from the government. In the process, they gave up their quest for exploring and experimenting with new programmes in view of the changing needs and requirements of the people. The voluntary organisations, thus, tended to lose their innovative and enterprising character which is their very essence.
3. Government grants brought in an element of formalism and made it incumbent on the voluntary organisations to evolve and incorporate organisational rules and procedures for strict adherence. This, in turn, controlled and curbed their spontaneity, informality and personal initiative. Further, bureaucratisation and formalisation changed the basic character of the voluntary organisations and made them compulsive about organisational compliance and less responsive to the needs of the people.
4. Bureaucratisation brought in an element of hierarchy in the voluntary organisations and changed the concept of peer-group working for a common cause with devotion and commitment. Hierarchical arrangement of positions in these organisations brought in an element of unhealthy competition for capturing positions of power. Also, collective and corporate decision-making became increasingly difficult in such hierarchical organisations. Thus, decision-making tended to be more centralised in voluntary organisations which, in turn, destroyed their corporate and collegiate nature.

5. Worse of all, with power and patronage, voluntary organisations became highly politicised and tended to swing to the side of the power elite than to the people whom they were to serve. The politicians developed vested interests in voluntary organisations and used them for their political gains rather than helping them to freely accomplish their goal of serving the clientele group.

Sharp Decline in Voluntary Spirit Among People

In substance, although voluntary organisations got a boost with the governmental support, yet it has to be accepted that in this process their character radically changed. In fact, it became incumbent upon them to redefine their role and relationship with the government, other funding bodies, the clientele groups and the community at large. After formation of national government, some of the voluntary organisations accepted their intermediary role between the government and the people, as they thought the national government had a major responsibility for organising the welfare of the people and ensuring their well-being. In this role, they visualised themselves as an extension agency for making the benefit of various schemes available to the people.³ A large number of voluntary organisations sprang up during this period. They will surely number in thousands.⁴ Thus, the period soon after Independence saw an unprecedented growth of voluntary organisations. But it is ironical that with increasing number of voluntary organisations, voluntary spirit, 'community involvement' and 'popular participation' declined in the same proportion.⁵

In a short period, following Independence, a sharp decline was witnessed in voluntary organisations supported and sustained by popular contribution. It is more evident in rural than in the urban areas. A society which had a long tradition of building, organising and running schools, colleges, libraries, reading rooms, hospitals and dispensaries, seems to have lost the urge to mobilise resources for such purposes. Not only schools, libraries and hospitals are no longer being built with voluntary efforts but even the resources are also not forthcoming for running and maintaining the existing ones. What is more distressing is that schools and hospitals, which are being built by charitable trusts, only carry that label and cater to a certain class of people who can really afford to pay for their services. In the name of maintaining 'high standards', the charitable hospitals and public schools charge high fees and are no longer within the reach of the poor and the deprived. All this is in the voluntary sector, but surely not accessible to all, and most certainly not to the poor and the deprived.

Evaporation of Popular Contribution of Funds

In the same manner, village communities mobilised their own resources for building, repair and maintenance of roads, public wells, temples and dharm shalas (serai or inn). Trees were planted on road sides and arrangements were made for providing drinking water on the highways for travelling public. Social and cultural functions were organised round the year, all over the countryside with public donations and contributions. But this spirit of contributing for common and collective good seems to have become a matter of the past. A few examples will substantiate the point. In a large village of Uttar Pradesh, the Pradhan had told that he could not collect Rs. 250 from the village for making arrangements for providing drinking water for the children of the primary school of the village. People were of the view that the school was run by the Panchayat or the Basic Siksha Parishad and it was their responsibility to provide drinking water to the children and not that of the people. By contrast, people collected thousands of rupees, in the same village, for organising 'Bhandara' community feeding, on a religious occasion.⁶ In another village, the Pradhan had told that he was forced to discontinue arrangements for drinking water in 1964, which were made year after year in summer months, since immemorable past, because people did not contribute for this cause and he found it difficult to mobilise funds for meeting the increasing cost of making such an arrangement. Thus, it reflects not any lack of economic resources in the countryside but a change in their very attitude. It is in order, here, to briefly discuss the factors which account for this change in the attitudes and orientations of the people.

Changed Attitudes

First, in order to contain the hopes and aspirations of the people, aroused during the freedom struggle, the national government launched a variety of welfare, relief and development programmes. The government took direct initiative to provide education, health, welfare and recreational facilities in a big way. Furthermore, it made public funds available to voluntary organisations for initiating and expanding services for children, women, old, handicapped, disabled, poor and the deprived. Voluntary organisations also got lot of financial support from the government for extension and training work. Consequently, voluntary organisations tended to increasingly depend on the government. People withdrew, as the government support came in.

Secondly, increasing 'state welfarism' changed the sensibility of the people. In the past, poor, deprived and the sick evoked lot of community sentiments and generous contributions were made for

ameliorating their conditions. But this has become increasingly difficult now. Thus, the State support for welfare programmes in a way blurred and blunted the sensibility of the people and took away their urge and initiative to build and sustain their own institutions to cater to the needs of various groups.

Thirdly, in the wake of electoral politics that followed Independence, politicians developed vested interest in voluntary organisations and used them to consolidate and enhance their own influence base. Thus, voluntary organisations lost their wide community support base and became increasingly dependent on political support.

Fourthly, lot of people who migrated from rural areas initially retained their roots there. They had an inner urge and sense of obligation to extend help and assistance to their native village. They, therefore, mobilised resources to build institutions or assist needy individuals and families. In this process, a lot of money flowed from urban areas to villages for various social purposes. But slowly, as this generation of people lost their roots and settled down in cities, they stopped giving assistance for various activities which they supported earlier. Consequently, a lot of urban funds which flowed to rural areas earlier declined considerably or stopped altogether.

Thus, there was radical change in the very nature and character of voluntary organisations in the first phase of post-independent India. Their popular support base had shrunk and they became increasingly dependent on governmental support. But as new problems mounted and limits of the State welfarism became clearer, a new initiative appeared in voluntary sector in the late sixties and early seventies. A brief review of these developments is, therefore, desirable.

VOLUNTARY ACTION DURING EMERGENCY AND JANATA PARTY RULE-- THE SECOND PHASE

As the development model unfolded, disparities between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' began to increase and poverty in rural areas became more pronounced with every successive plan. The strategy adopted for increasing agricultural productivity helped the landed and better endowed sections of the rural society. Agriculture productivity increased but it resulted in regional and social disparities.

In order to deal with the problem of mass poverty and unemployment, the government launched specific programmes for poor and the deprived. In this effort, government sought help of voluntary organisations to ensure that the benefits reached the needy and the deserving. At the same time, a lot of funds were made available by

foreign donors to voluntary organisations for organising relief and rehabilitation for drought and famine affected people. Thus, a lot of young people were drawn to the voluntary organisations at this juncture, but as voluntary organisations began to muster support and gain strength, there was a shift in this trend. At the call of Jayaprakash Narayan, in 1973, a lot of voluntary groups and organisations split and rallied around him. He gave a call for 'Sampurna Kranti' (total revolution), essentially directed against the government. Thus, the voluntary organisations, which joined the agitation, were involved in direct confrontation with the government. The government became repressive and came down heavily on the voluntary organisations. The political situation deteriorated to such an extent that the democratic process was suspended and a state of emergency was declared which continued till the Lok Sabha elections of 1977. This meant a serious setback to voluntary organisations which were slowly gaining momentum. This, in a way, was a new phase in the history of voluntary organisations, which was marked by a divorce with the government and compelled them to restructure their relations with the state.

After the Lok Sabha elections in 1977, there was a radical shift in the political scene. The Congress Party which had ruled the country for over three decades was voted out. A new political configuration in the name of Janata Party emerged which got into power in the Centre and subsequently in a large number of states. With the Janata Government coming into power, a new climate was created for voluntary action. The Janata Government visualised specific role for voluntary organisations in various development and welfare programmes launched for the rural people, such as Adult Education, Integrated Rural Development, Antyodaya scheme, Block-level planning and training of lower-level functionaries. With this initiative and support, voluntary organisations found a climate for reviewing their relationship with the government and forming a new partnership.

Involvement of Industrialists

Along with the voluntary organisations, the Janata Government also encouraged and supported rural development programmes. Although industrial and business houses had been involved with welfare and development activities earlier too, yet it was done with a difference. The government sought their active involvement, drawing their attention to their social responsibility. In order to mobilise the support of the industrial and business houses and to involve them in rural development work, special tax exemption was granted to them. The tax exemption policy of the government gave added impetus to industrial houses, which were already engaged in rural development

programmes.⁷ Some of these units took new initiatives and expanded their programmes and activities. Besides, many new and enterprising industrialists got actively involved in rural development programmes. These industrial houses either supported voluntary organisations engaged in rural development or initiated and organised their own programmes. Some of them set up special units to plan and execute rural development programmes. Their activities were varied and wideranging from relief and welfare to promotion of science and technology appropriate to rural society. Broadly speaking, their activities covered agricultural development, including animal husbandry, poultry and dairy development, minor irrigation, rural industry, development of infrastructural facilities, such as roads, drinking water, electrification and housing, social services, like dispensaries, nutrition programmes, education and vocational training. In brief, they launched on wide-ranging programmes covering all aspects of life, keeping in view immediate and long-term needs of the rural society. But this process got interrupted with the change in the political power in the country.

VOLUNTARY ACTION DURING THE JANATA REGIME PERIOD--THE THIRD PHASE

The Janata Government went out of power in 1980 and the Congress (I) got elected. In order to win back the lost confidence of the people, it intensified its programmes for the poor but scrapped and modified almost all the programmes initiated by the Janata Government. The tax exemption granted to industrial houses was withdrawn. Thus, a new partnership which was sought to be built between the government and the business and industrial houses during the Janata regime came to an abrupt end. After Smt. Gandhi came to power, bureaucracy was increasingly involved in implementation of programmes launched by the government for rural poor. The voluntary organisations were sidelined and the bureaucracy assumed major responsibility for executing and implementing most of the poverty alleviation programmes. Smt. Gandhi's government appointed a major Commission of Enquiry--the Kudal Commission--to look into the affairs of the 'Gandhian' organisations. This certainly was not an attack on Gandhian organisations alone, but reflected government's attitude to voluntary organisations as a whole. It meant a serious setback to the strength voluntary organisations had gained during past few years. In fact, voluntary organisations, which had gradually found a defined role for themselves, got distracted and confused.

New Institutions and Rising Budgetary Allocations

The situation began to change after 1983. A new organisation,

called CART (Council for the Advancement of Rural Technology), was set up to improve conditions in rural areas through diffusion and innovation of technology with the help of voluntary organisations. The government provided financial support to voluntary organisations for various developmental and welfare programmes. For instance, the Ministry of Social Welfare earmarked Rs. 9.37 crore for voluntary organisations during 1984-85. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare earmarked Rs. 48.5 lakh for voluntary organisations in 1984-85. This figure was raised to Rs. 7.2 crore in 1985-86. The Ministry of Rural Development, in its Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) programme, Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) programme, and programmes of promotion of Voluntary Schemes and Social Action provided assistance amounting to Rs. 6.5 crore in 1985-86. This was more than three times the assistance provided during 1984-85 (Rs. two crore).

The latest move is creation of a single organisation called CAPART by merging PADI and CART. The proposed budget of CAPART is more than double of what PADI and CART got individually during 1985-86. It is likely that CAPART would emerge as the largest single funding body for voluntary organisations in the country.

The Seventh Five Year Plan⁸ document envisages a definite role for voluntary organisations. It spells out the areas in which voluntary organisations could work for supplementing the efforts of the government. A sum of Rs. 250 crore has been provided in the Plan for this purpose.

Along with extending financial help to voluntary organisations, there is a talk of evolving a code of conduct to regulate their activities. There is lot of resentment about it, at least in some sections, and many activists have already expressed their apprehensions and are definitely opposed to the idea that has been mooted.⁹

What kind of partnership will develop between the government and voluntary organisations is not difficult to visualise. If the past experience is any indication, it can be said in no uncertain terms that the government has coopted, controlled and curbed voluntary organisations depending on its needs. During past four decades, hardly any systematic effort has been made to develop a consistent policy to encourage, promote, support and sustain voluntary efforts. At a formal level, voluntary organisations are to be registered under the Societies Registration Act 1861 and are not expected to make any profit on their activities and are considered non-government and non-political. As registered societies, they have to submit to the Registrar of Societies audited statement of their accounts and report of their activities annually. As it is, the government exercises

adequate control over the voluntary organisations through this mechanism. But if distorted, it can become an endless exercise in not allowing voluntary organisations to even come into existence. Recently, in a seminar, an activist had told that the going rate of bribe for registration of an organisation, under the Societies Registration Act, is Rs. 5,000 in Bihar and Rs. 3,000-4,000 in Uttar Pradesh. Will any rightly motivated and genuinely public-spirited person venture to take a lead to have a society registered in such an atmosphere? That apart, isn't it ironical that the national government today enforces the same Act of Registration on voluntary organisations which was designed by the colonial rulers to emaciate rather than regulate the aspirations of well-motivated citizens imbued with a sense of mission and commitment to help their fellow beings in distress.

Faults of Voluntary Organisations

The voluntary organisations too cannot escape the blame altogether for this state of affair. Most of them seem to have fallen for an easy option and have tended to lean heavily either on the government or on foreign funding. In either case, they stand on a shaky foundation with little or no financial support from the people or the community. Without going into the controversy about financing voluntary organisations, it may suffice to emphasise that in the absence of financial support from the people, it would not be possible for the voluntary organisations to maintain and assert their autonomy. The plea is not against government or foreign funding, but basically against what it entails for the voluntary organisations in terms of their autonomy, internal organisational dynamics, relations with community, and bureaucratic compulsions.

Notwithstanding the above mentioned problems, the voluntary organisations cannot continue with intermediary role and feel content with the easy options they have taken to. In fact, the challenge emanates from the development model itself which has created problems of displacement, ecology, environment, deforestation, bonded labour, poverty, unemployment, slums, etc. The pronounced goal of the development was to create an egalitarian social order based on values of equality, freedom and justice. But this has been totally belied as poverty and disparities have grown many-fold despite economic growth. To be more specific, a few illustrations are in order. For instance, construction of large dams and power plants have meant displacement of a sizable population. Their problems in terms of human misery and sufferings are simply heart rendering.¹⁰ In the same manner, commercialisation of forest resources have deprived the tribals of their traditional sources of livelihood without

alternative support base. Pauperisation in the countryside is continuously pushing people in very large numbers to the cities in search of employment, where they are forced to live in slums in most inhuman conditions. In the face of growing miseries, perpetrated by the development model followed so far, 50 per cent of our population is forced to live on a subsistence level. Surely, some thing is inherently wrong with the development model. Mere relief, rehabilitation and welfare will not foot the bill. The voluntary organisations will have to devise programmes and strategy to ensure that poor can live with dignity and self-respect. The poor have to be organised to raise meaningful protest to resist the model of development which has not only deprived them of their share in development but has let loose naked violence on them which threaten their very survival. Apart from that, they will have to fight corrupt bureaucrats and vested political interests which have given a definite twist to development and blocked the flow of legitimate benefits to their rightful claimants. The voluntary organisations have to play a crucial role in this task. But they will be able to play this role only when they build their support base in the community.

SUMMING UP

To summarise the discussion on the role of voluntary organisations in rural development, it can be said that a long tradition of community based voluntary work, which had been built over past two centuries got lost in the period following independence. Thanks to the policies of the government which co-opted voluntary organisations and eroded their base in the community. Leaders who had built and guided these organisations in the troubled period of Indian history either joined the government or government run institutions or tended to mainly depend on aid and assistance from the government under its various schemes and programmes. One can understand the motives of vested political interests which used voluntary organisations to service their ends more than service the cause for which such organisations exist. But one wonders why Gandhians could not resist this temptation and became party to the distortion and distraction of voluntary movement which Gandhi had so zealously built. 'Chipko' movement in the Himalayan region and the 'Apiko' in Karnataka would figure among the few voluntary movements which have strong base at the grassroots level. Only such movements and those leading them can repose faith and confidence in people and pave the way for the emergence and growth of genuine voluntary action in the country, which is the crying need of the hour.

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Role of Voluntary Agencies in Rural Development

I. UDAYA BHASKARA REDDY

IN A country like ours, where three-fourths of its total population lives in villages, the all-round development of rural areas acquires a significant importance. In the Indian context, 'Rural Development' can be defined as "integrated development of the area and the people through optimum development and utilisation (and conservation where necessary) of local resources--physical, biological and human--and by bringing about necessary institutional, structural and attitudinal changes by delivering a package of services to encompass not only the economic field, i.e., agriculture, allied activities, rural industries but also establishment of required social infrastructure and services in the area of health and nutrition, sanitation, housing, drinking water and literacy, with the ultimate objective of 'improving quality of life of 'rural poor' and the 'rural weak'¹. Thus, rural development refers to the process of improving living conditions, providing minimum needs, increasing productivity and employment opportunities and developing potentials of rural resources through integration of spatial, functional and temporal aspects.

In view of stupendous task involved in the process of rural development, government, industries, voluntary agencies, institutions, banks, Christian missionaries, business houses, trade unions, etc., are increasingly getting involved in various developmental endeavours in rural areas. In this context, the role of voluntary agencies assumes crucial importance and, of late, they have acquired greater significance than before.

A voluntary agency may be defined as "an organisational entity set up by a group of persons on their own initiative or partly by an outside motivation to help the people of a locality to undertake activities in a self-reliant manner (partly or wholly) to satisfy needs and also bring them and the public sector extension services closer to one another for more equitable and effective development of the various sections of the rural poor".² Thus voluntary agencies are non-profit organisations, primarily established to represent the

needs and aspirations of the people intended to serve.

EMERGENCE OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Voluntary action has been a long tradition in India and occupies a pride place, especially in the field of welfare. The role of voluntary agencies is well-recognised and the policy-makers and administrators also recognise its contribution. According to the First Plan Document, "A major responsibility for organising activities in different fields of social welfare like the welfare of women and children, social education, community organisation, etc., falls naturally on private voluntary agencies. These private agencies have long been working in their own humble way and without adequate aid for the achievement of their objectives with their own leadership, organisation and resources. Any plan for social and economic regeneration should take into account the services rendered by these agencies and the State should give them maximum cooperation in strengthening their effort. Public co-operation through voluntary social service organisations is capable of yielding valuable results in channelising private efforts for the promotion of social welfare".³ With the launching of various developmental programmes after Independence, voluntary effort has shifted its focus from welfare activities to the challenging field of rural development, particularly in implementing the poverty alleviation programmes. They are engaged in various activities closely related to rural development. While some are directly involved in working with poor, helping them to get the benefits of many anti-poverty schemes, some others train workers for organisations engaged in rural transformation, still some more get development workers, specialists in various branches of knowledge and social workers together for seminars, conferences and workshops to exchange experiences and learn from each other.⁴

There has been enormous increase in the number of voluntary agencies all over the country since Independence. They have registered five-fold increase from 1,739 in 1953 to 8,052 in 1980 and at present it is estimated that there are more than 10,000 voluntary agencies engaged in various welfare and developmental works⁵. Activities of voluntary agencies in our country can be broadly classified into the following categories⁶:

1. **Charity:** Giving food, clothing, medicine, land, buildings, etc., and alms in cash and kind.
2. **Welfare:** Providing facilities for education, health, drinking water, roads, communication, etc.

3. **Relief:** Responding to call of duties during natural calamities, like floods, drought, earthquakes, etc., and man-made calamities, like refugee influx, ravages of war, etc.
4. **Rehabilitation:** Continuing and follow-up of the work in areas struck by calamities and starting activities that are durable in nature.
5. **Services:** Building up infrastructure in depressed backward areas, such as tractor hiring services, providing or facilitating credit supply of seeds, fertilisers, technical know-how, etc.
6. **Development of Socio-Economic Environment Around Human Beings:** Socio-economic transformation on the area-basis, covering all the people in a given area or concentrating only on a particular group of neglected people in need of help.
7. **Development of Human Beings:** Conscious raising, awakening, conscientising, organising, recording of priorities to suit social justice, redeeming the past and opening doors of opportunities to the oppressed and exploited.

These activities cover women, children, handicapped, the aged, the youth, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and other backward classes, landless and small farmers, artisans, etc.

VOLUNTARY EFFORTS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The basic aim of implementing various rural development programmes in our country is to improve the living conditions of rural poor, who form the majority among the poor. The voluntary agencies have been involved in rural development, much before government's efforts in this field was started. They were the early catalysts for new thrust in rural transformation and their role was that of pioneer, innovator and scientist.⁷ With the increase in implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes in rural areas, the involvement of voluntary agencies is also on the increase. The much increased stress on rural development in recent years has induced voluntary agencies to take up several developmental activities. From the once welfare and charity approach, the voluntary agencies are gradually changing and widening their outlook towards area development. Documents of successive Five-Year Plans have laid emphasis on the need for involvement of voluntary agencies as a significant aspect of participation of people in various developmental endeavours. Voluntary agencies have, by and large, assisted governmental efforts in: (1) bringing to the knowledge of the government the difficulties experienced by people in getting the benefit of government programmes

to which they are entitled; (2) reporting the irregularities in implementation of programmes and see that the programme benefit reaches its destination without getting syphoned off en route; and (3) motivating local communities to generate resources from within the community to meet all their needs which fall outside the government programmes (there are several instances of this taking place).⁸

The role of voluntary agencies in rural development is assuming importance because of their special qualities, like innovativeness, commitment among workers for effective implementation, flexibility in approach to suit local conditions, close contacts with local people, high level of motivation, minimum procedural practices, which are known to be missing among government functionaries. In general, the main goals of voluntary agencies in rural development are: (1) to help the people to help themselves in their endeavours of progress; (2) to stimulate and promote growth of inherent potentials among people for their development; (3) to initiate a process of participatory development; (4) to bring about social justice for disadvantaged group and create awareness about their rights and duties in our society; and (5) to promote growth in social, political and economic aspects of life in rural areas.⁹

In view of their increased participation in rural development, the Seventh Plan has given importance to the role of voluntary agencies has been raising the provision of funds for their involvement in rural development programmes. The Plan document has laid the following criteria for identifying voluntary agencies for enlisting help in relation to rural development:

1. The organisation should be a legal entity.
2. It should be based in a rural area, working there for a minimum of three years.
3. It should have broad-based objectives serving the social and economic needs of the community as a whole and mainly the weaker sections. It must not work for profit but on 'no-profit and no-loss basis'.
4. Its activities should be open to all citizens of India, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, sex or race.
5. It should have the necessary flexibility, professional competence and organisational skills to implement programmes.
6. Its office-bearers should not be elected members of any political party.
7. It must declare that it will adopt constitutional and non-violent means for rural development purposes.
8. It must be committed to secular and democratic concepts and methods of functioning.¹⁰

In a country like ours, with its overwhelming majority of population living in about six lakh villages, it is normal to find that a large number of voluntary agencies are working in these villages in implementing various developmental programmes. While most of them are concentrating their efforts locally, some of the national level agencies are also working in different fields of rural development. The following are some of the national level agencies involved in some of the important fields of rural development:¹¹

1. **Agriculture and Allied Fields**--(1) Bharat Krishak Samaj, New Delhi; (2) Young Farmers' Association, New Delhi; (3) Action for Food Production (AFPRO), New Delhi; and (4) Appropriate Technology Development Association, Lucknow.
2. **Food and Nutrition**--(1) Catholic Relief Services, New Delhi; (2) CARITAS, India ; and (3) People's Action for Development, India (PADI), New Delhi.
3. **Child Welfare**--(1) Indian Council of Child Welfare, New Delhi; (2) Balkanji Bari, Bombay; and (3) Federation of Organisation Working for Children in India (FOWCI), New Delhi.
4. **Harijan Welfare**--Harijan Sevak Sangh, New Delhi.
5. **Tribal Welfare**--Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, New Delhi.
6. **General Rural Development and Coordination Functions**--(1) Bharat Sevak Samaj; (2) Church Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), New Delhi; (3) Asian Institute of Rural Development, Bangalore; (4) Centre for Agrarian Research Training and Education (CARTE), Ghaziabad, U.P.; (5) National Christian Council of India, Nagpur; (6) Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD), New Delhi; (7) Rama-krishna Mission, Belurmath, Calcutta; (8) Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi; (9) Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, New Delhi; (10) Indian Council for Social Welfare, Bombay; and (11) CARITAS, New Delhi.

Further, Ghanshyam Shah and Chaturvedi¹² have classified voluntary agencies working in the field of rural development into three categories:(1) "The Techno-Managerial Voluntary Agencies", which work on the premise that the process of rural development can be accelerated through modern management techniques and technology, (2) "Reformist Voluntary Agencies", which try to bring about changes in the social and economic relationship with the existing political framework. They usually carry out more than one programme linked to overall rural socio-economic development, and (3) "The Radical Voluntary Agencies", which seek to challenge the existing production relations. Their attempt is to organise the exploited against the exploiters.

They undertake some economic, health or educational programmes as an 'entry point' to mobilise masses for political action.

SOME AGENCIES WORKING FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Voluntary effort in rural development at Central level is promoted on large scale with greater responsibility through People's Action for Development, India (PADI).^{*} PADI, which is functioning in close co-operation with Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It is working with several voluntary agencies in transforming rural areas. PADI, which has completed 25 years of service, has so far assisted 375 projects with a total financial outlay of Rs. 26.78 crore. Of these, 214 projects involving Rs. 10.16 crore have been completed and the remaining are in progress.¹³ The main thrust of PADI in associating with voluntary agencies is to help in project implementation, assist farmers, especially small and marginal, rural artisans and landless labourers by providing them integrated services for raising employment, production and income and by organising services for distribution of agricultural inputs. PADI's commitment to rural regeneration is perhaps best seen in the work done in Anand (Gujarat), in agricultural production and productivity services co-operative union. Between 1979 and 1984, this organisation set up a remarkable customer service facilities. It employs 27 tractors and associated implements to cover an area of 1,00,000 acres with an impressive average of about 1,100 hours per tractor per year.¹⁴ Further, PADI it is associated with several rural development programmes, like lift irrigation, providing facilities to fishermen, agro-based activities,--like horticulture, dairy, poultry, village industries, etc.--improving drinking water supply and sanitation, development of women and children, social education and so forth. Various voluntary agencies associated with PADI are functioning successfully in implementing various rural developmental programmes under the leadership of philanthropic individuals and missions for upliftment rural people through various multipurpose programmes.¹⁵

Another national level voluntary agency--Asian Institute of Rural Development, Bangalore--has been actively involved in rural development programmes, like development of human resources through training programmes, transfer of technology in sericulture, field action in villages, publication and research and promoting national and international linkages. It is also implementing two government

*PADI has since been superseded by a new organisation called CAPART in which PADI and Council for Rural Technology (CART) have been merged.

programmes--the Lab-to-Land Programme and TRYSEM in villages. The training programmes includes, Asian Rural Service Corps (ARSC) for trainees of government and voluntary organisations from Asia and African regions. Another important training programme conducted by the Institute is Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, for the benefit of management level personnel of government, voluntary organisations, credit agencies, cooperatives, etc.¹⁶

Further, various institutions and banks are also associated with voluntary agencies in implementing rural development programmes. The role of Bank of Baroda, is one such example, where a mechanism was evolved through which voluntary agencies have been sponsored and the results of these have been encouraging. One of its innovative programmes in rural development is through setting up of Gram Vikas Kendras (GVK) and seeking close collaboration of business houses. While the banks set up GVK, the business houses sponsored Aegis Navsarjan Rural Development Foundation in Gujarat to initiate rural development process in 500 villages of six backward taluks. They have undertaken various rural development programmes, viz., promoting infrastructure facilities, economic, education, health and medical care, culture, etc. Thus, the foundation and the GVK became the focal point for rural development. They established effective liaison with DRDA, DIC, KVIC, KVIB, departments of agriculture, animal husbandry, social welfare, public works, training centre, Lions Club, Rotary Club, etc., and frequently discussed with them about the prospects of rural development in these areas and exploit them by overcoming the physical and procedural problems.¹⁷

In addition, it is also important to examine the efforts of some locally concentrated agencies in the field of rural development. In Maharashtra's Beed district, 'Manavlok' is actively involved in implementing various rural development programmes in over 50 villages covering population of about 75,000. It is implementing various agricultural development programmes, like 'Krishik Panchyat', which is intended to help marginal farmers through supply of seeds, fertilisers and through pursuing them to use modern technology in farming. So far, over 2,000 farmers have benefited. Further, the farmers are also provided interest-free loans for purchasing cattle, agriculture implements, etc. Other programmes include waste land development, digging community wells, construction of nalabunds and check dams for storage of water for subsequent use for irrigation, construction of godowns for storing grains, afforestation, training in weaving and carpet making, etc. Besides these, the agency is also involved in welfare and rehabilitation programmes for women and children.¹⁸

Another voluntary agency "Vishwa Karma Udyog Samuh", also working in Beed district, has started working with an objective of achieving

an integrated rural development through economic, social and educational transformation. The agency believes that rural areas can be developed by tapping the available natural resources, art and craftsmanship of the people and general level of intelligence. With this in view, the "Vishwa Karma Unified Village Development Programme", has been started by the organisation through identifying a group of patriotic entrepreneurs and imparting necessary training to make them self-sufficient. The agency has started a stone crusher, printing press, units for brick manufacturing, fabrication, painting, etc. Further, training in production of chalk pieces, wax candles, envelopes, refills and amonia printing, etc., was provided and assistance was also provided in securing loans for starting their own enterprises. The results were outstanding in making the entrepreneurs self-sufficient. Further, the organisation is planning to start an institution for research in natural resources of power, like solar energy, gobar gas, hydel power, etc., with the aim to raise the living standards of common man in rural areas.¹⁹

Sarvangin Vikas Sanstha, operating in Latur district, is another example of involvment in rural development programmes. It has initiated cooperative farming in several villages by bringing the fallow and barren lands under cultivation. They have also dug wells for irrigating these lands, and have undertaken afforestation schemes on large scale by planting variety of trees like subabul, mango, lim, bamboo, etc. All the landless farmers in the villages were covered under these schemes. They were imparted training in weaving mats, carpets, etc., to supplement their incomes.²⁰

Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation, Uruli Kanchan, in Pune district, with the help of PADI, has initiated schemes for improving milk production through cross-breeding programmes, which is instrumental in boosting the rural economy. Another significant project is the fertiliser project, launched in Colaba district, aims at educating farmers about advantages of using urea nitrogen to increase paddy production. The results show that the yield in demonstration plots was three times higher than the average yield of other farms.²¹ Shri Sivaji Shikshan Prasarak Mandal, another agency in Solapur district, has been working in the field of rural development, since Independence. It has initiated a lift irrigation project, with the help of PADI, and by this lift irrigation and the assistance received from other foreign agencies and state government, the village has come up as a model village having an integrated development project. It has almost all agricultural, horticultural and fodder development activities, development of animal husbandry, such as dairy, goatry, fishery, poultry and sheep-rearing programmes. Further, it has also an Industrial Training Centre, TRYSEM programme, Blanket Making

Training Centre, brick making activity, energy saving programmes, such as wind mills, solar heaters, solar cookers, bio-gas training programme and almost everything required for a village. All these developments are due to devoted and dedicated services of voluntary workers.²²

The foregoing discussion about the involvement of various national and local voluntary agencies in the field of various developmental endeavours, clearly shows the increasing participation of voluntary agencies in rural development.

MERITS AND LIMITATIONS

Since rendering service to poor is the main objective of voluntary agencies, they are eminently suitable to undertake rural development works and also help in implementing government programmes. They have inherent capacity to organise rural poor and weaker sections for defending their rights. They are in a better position to organise rural masses for availing the collective benefits. Further, they can also make a positive contribution as watch-dogs of public interest close to the community. They are supposed to be potentially superior to official agencies in the following three respects: (i) their workers can be more sincerely devoted than government staff to the task of reducing the sufferings of the poor; (ii) they can have a better rapport with the rural poor than government employees; and (iii) since they are not bound by rigid bureaucratic rules and procedures, they can operate with greater flexibility and can adjust their activities quickly and continuously learning from their experience.²³

Further, their natural capabilities--like raising funds, nearness to community, ability to experiment, flexibility in approach, human touch, better grasp of the needs and problems of people, etc.--put them in an advantageous position to undertake rural development programmes.

Limitations

Though voluntary agencies are in a better position to undertake rural development programmes, yet the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development convened by the United Nations in 1979, felt that high percentage of failure of rural development programmes in many developing countries was mainly due to lack of people's participation in development programmes. The conference also recognised the significance of people's participation and positive role of voluntary agencies in rural development which were synonymous.²⁴ Further, Reddy²⁵ has observed some common irregularities among the

voluntary agencies as follows: (i) Most of the agencies are headed by a strong and dominant personality without much devolution of power and autonomy to the lower sections, thereby giving an impression that these are one-man shows; (ii) Recruitment of personnel is generally done on the basis of caste, religion and other personal considerations, rather than judging the commitment and aptitude of the recruits; (iii) Exploitation of unemployed educated young men and women by paying meagre salaries and by using them sometimes for anti-social activities; (iv) The programmes implemented are, by and large, "agency-oriented" or "donor-oriented", rather than "people-oriented"; (v) Over-dependence on funding agencies and government rather than mobilising local resources and funds; and (vi) A general tendency to blame other agencies and authorities in case of failures, without attempting to recognise their own approach and working methods.

Further, voluntary agencies cannot do the jobs in certain areas like power, mining of coal and minerals, industry, savings and investments, magnitudes and equations, balance of payment flows, capacity utilisation, pricing and money and credit supplies, both because of nation-wide actions and decisions involved, which no voluntary agency is equipped to undertake or deal with, and because of the magnitude of finances called for. Thus, no area of national life and development, which required massive action through a nation-wide network and/or large resources, financial and human, is appropriate for voluntary agency action.²⁶ In addition, voluntary agencies also suffer from lack of professionalism. Most of the trained workers prefer to work in urban areas, rather than in rural areas. Thus, these agencies do not have enough expertise and skills to complete various aspects of their work, like preparing project proposals, statement of accounts, planning and implementation of schemes, etc. Further, they are heavily depending on dedication and sacrifice rather than competence and consistency. Above all, the major limitation is lack of sufficient funds for implementing the programmes.

CONCLUSION

In spite of several limitations, involvement of voluntary agencies in the process of rural development has become essential, due to government's inherent limitations in reaching the rural poor. If sufficient funds and guidance are provided, voluntary agencies can play a vital supportive role in developing rural areas. They can be of immense help to government in implementing their programmes, by helping in identifying the right beneficiaries, since they are closely attached to rural people. They can also give reliable feed back through monitoring the programmes. The Seventh Plan document has

identified several programmes and areas in which participation of voluntary agencies can be of great help in better implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes.²⁷

To conclude, it can be said that involvement of voluntary agencies in the process of rural development is one of the appropriate strategy for successful implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes. Although government may succeed in improving economic conditions of individuals, the voluntary agencies can help in uplifting weaker sections through collective efforts, like community irrigation, collective farming, community bio-gas, social forestry, etc., where they can motivate and provide managerial support for availing benefits collectively for community welfare. The government should recognise their role and should increase financial support, relax rules and regulations and, thus, encourage them to take up various developmental programmes, which will certainly prove a major step in the process of rural transformation.

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Voluntary Action in Rural Development in India

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT has been an important component of India's efforts towards betterment of living standards of people; and to this end the country has implemented, more or less successfully, a large number of programmes, its commitment dating from the earliest days of planning. Rural development under the Constitution is the direct responsibility of the State; it is the career bureaucracy which undertakes formulation and implementation of programmes of rural reconstruction.

Career bureaucracy has definite advantages in carrying out rural developmental responsibilities. It imparts to such programmes the strength and continuity which both hierarchy and professionalism command. However, even the most adoring advocates of bureaucracy would admit, it has its unique weaknesses and shortcomings also, which calls for creation of a voluntary sector. Bureaucracy is unfit for certain activities or may have met with failure in carrying them out. These functions can be entrusted to non-government bodies, called voluntary organisations. Voluntary action provides for flexibility, creativity, spontaneity, innovativeness, etc.

A voluntary agency is an organised group formed in order to promote some common interest of its members, in which membership is purely optional, not forced or mandatory, and exists independently of the State. Its major activity is not related to the business of making a living. David L. Sills, further argues that a test of a voluntary agency is that 'the volunteer (i.e., non-salaried) members constitute a majority of the participants'.¹ Today, it is becoming difficult to fulfil this condition. Human beings working in voluntary bodies have to maintain themselves and hence they do need to be paid, especially when the requirement of the day is to attract the professionals. But the salary paid to them is fixed on austerity basis and is much lower than what is paid outside for comparable talent.

Voluntary action for rural development, one must remember, supplements governmental efforts in the field in many significant ways. It

enlarges the scope of rural development plan by independently formulating its own activities, based on its own perception of rural needs. Voluntary organisations are the apt ones to mobilise villagers inclined for constructive work. They are best suited to channelise their spare time and energy and by doing so they foster the growth of leadership at various levels of the rural society. Besides, there are always some areas of work in which the career bureaucracy has established stories of failures to its credit(?): these ones are ideally fit for voluntary action. The voluntary agencies not only undertake constructive work but also exercise surveillance over the government in its role as a rural developer. They criticise government policies and programmes and, thus, provide an essential communication channel keeping it briefed about the successes and failures of rural development programmes. No less significant is another advantage flowing from them. As these agencies develop and show increasing competence in assuming larger responsibilities, they become qualified and fit for some additional functions which at present are vested in regular bureaucracy. Such devolution of functions is necessary, for without it the responsibilities of administration would tend to increase to a point beyond its capacity to cope.²

The word 'voluntary' does not suggest total absence of State control. Voluntary agencies have necessarily to operate within the framework of laws enacted by the State. They, for instance, have to comply with the Societies Registration Act, Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, Income Tax Act and the like. Their accounts are subject to audit and the government has power to investigate any foreign assistance to these agencies. The Kudal Commission enquiry into the functioning of the Gandhi Peace Foundation is a proof of the possible interface between the State and voluntary action.

Voluntary action in India is verily as old as the emergence of organised society itself. It originated as pure philanthropy or charity and this motivation sustains the effort all through history though other influences have also emerged of late leading to establishment of many voluntary bodies. Coming nearer to our times, even establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was a voluntary effort initiated by Allan Octavian Hume, acclaimed as its 'father and founder'.^{*} Addressing an open letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University in 1883, Hume gave a clarion call to the educated

^{*}This is how the Congress designated Hume on his death in 1912.

youth:

You are the salt of the land. And if amongst you the elite, fifty men cannot be found with sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative, and if needs be, devote the rest of their lives to the cause, then there is no hope for India. Her sons must and will remain mere humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers, for they who would be free themselves must strike the blow.³

That the Indian National Congress transcended its originally visualised objectives is beside the point here: no individual has the clairvoyance to cast the horoscope of the organisation he himself inspires to find.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Motivations for voluntary action are diverse, which is but to be expected in a country of the size and diversity of India. In India, the voluntary action has derived its principal inspiration from religion, Mahatma Gandhi, and patronage politics. Many trusts and foundations have been set up in the name of God to initiate, among others, specific programmes of betterment of rural life. These are philanthropic activities and are inspired by religion. The Tirumal Tirupati Devasthanam, which manages the temple complex of Lord Venkateswara, at Tirupati has expanded its concern and taken up a variety of philanthropic projects which include actions promoting rural development also. The Ramakrishna Mission (founded in 1897) is also actively involved in many amelioration programmes. Some like Sri Admar Mutt Education Council of Udupi (Karnataka) open educational institutions and promote educational development. Similarly, Christianity has prompted establishment of several institutions in various parts of India to take up rural development activities on humanitarian grounds; even though some suspect that their motivation is proselytising.

Mahatma Gandhi, who was never tired of reminding the people that India lives in its villages and who committed himself to rural reconstruction,, created a countrywide network of institutions devoted to the rural cause and raised a widely spread corps of social workers working in and for the villages. Gandhi inspired voluntary action to a degree no one else could. Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan belong to the same family, continuing, in their own way, the Gandhian ashram traditions, of course, amidst their own difficulties.

There is a third category of voluntary agencies also. An inclination among political parties may be seen to create or infiltrate and control, voluntary agencies. Thus, voluntary bodies are also getting viewed as but opportunities for promoting partisan politics.⁴ The Communists in India, as we all know, alienated themselves from the national mainstream by not participating in the 'Quit India' Movement of 1942 launched by Mahatma Gandhi. In 1943, Bengal found itself in the grip of an exceptionally severe famine in the course of which the Communists spread out to the villages and undertook extensive relief work, which, it is common knowledge, paid them handsome political dividends in later years.

MAGNITUDE OF VOLUNTARY ACTION

The need for voluntary action is self-evident, and India has recognised it since the early days of its Independence. The First Five-Year Plan⁵ provided Rs. 4 crore for assistance by the Central Government for voluntary organisations (and Rs. one crore for youth camps and labour for students). It was, moreover, around this time that the Bharat Sevak Samaj was established to act as a non-political and non-official national platform for constructive work. The Samaj was intended to assist in the development of existing voluntary organisations, its functions being:⁶

1. To find and develop avenues of voluntary service for the citizens of India:
 - (a) to promote national sufficiency and build up the economic strength of the country,
 - (b) to promote the social well-being of the community and to mitigate the privations and hardships of its less favoured sections; and
2. To draw out the available unused time, energy and other resources of the people and direct them into various fields of social and economic activity.

Each successive Plan has set aside funds for utilisation by voluntary organisations. The current Seventh Five Year Plan carries a provision of Rs. 200 crore for them.

It is difficult to assess the number of voluntary agencies engaged in rural development but one can safely fix their number at 800--this is the number of voluntary agencies receiving assistance from the Central Government. The Ministry of Rural Development has set up a

body to deal with the voluntary bodies: the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART). The CAPART was set up in 1986 by merging in it two existing organisations, namely, People's Action for Development (India) and the Council for Advancement of Rural Technology. The CAPART channelises funds to the voluntary organisations for implementing rural development programmes, and to this end a portion of the funds available under different anti-poverty programmes, like Integrated Rural Development Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, National Rural Employment Programme, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme, Low Cost Sanitation, etc., is made available to CAPART for being given to the voluntary organisations. More specifically, the CAPART has been established "to encourage, promote and assist voluntary action in the implementation of projects for enhancement of rural prosperity" and "to strengthen and promote voluntary efforts in rural development with focus on injecting new technological inputs in this belief".⁷ Since its inception in September 1986 till February 1987, it has sanctioned 453 projects with a total cost of Rs. 324 lakh.⁸

Mention must also be made of bodies like the Central Social Welfare Board and the National Wasteland Board which, like CAPART, extend financial assistance to voluntary bodies for implementing rural development programmes even though the scale may be much lower. It is a statutory requirement for a voluntary agency to receive a certification from the Home Ministry for securing eligibility for foreign funds.

As already mentioned, no fewer than 800 voluntary organisations are presently in existence and taking up programmes of rural development. The more prominent ('nodal') among them are: (1) Social Work and Research Centre, Tilonia, Rajasthan; (2) Young Mizo Association; (3) Haryana Social Work and Research Centre, Khorl, Mahendragarh; (4) Gramin Vikas Samiti, Village Pethia, Patna; (5) Social Work and Research Centre, Kashipur, Koraput, Orissa; (6) Association for the Rural Poor, Royaburam, Madras; (7) Prayag Samaj Seva Sansthan, Tildoneera, Raipur, Madhya Pradesh; (8) Regional Research and Study Centre, Arbind Nagar, Midnapore, West Bengal; (9) Rural Centre for Human Interests, Churvadhar, Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh; (10) Kerala Shastri Sahitya Parishad, Trivandrum; (11) Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency, Bangalore; (12) Tamil Nadu Action Group, Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu; (13) Sucheta Kriplani Shiksha Niketan, Mahaklar, Jodhpur; (14) Antyodaya Chetna Mandal, Barkhand, Orissa; (15) Rural Communes, Marine Street, Bombay; (16) Gandhi Ashram Makokshi, Chuchu, Yimlang, Nagaland; (17) Institute for Social Education and Development, Indranagar, Madras; (18) People's Action for

Development, Trivandrum; (19) Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra, Brindavan, U.P.; (20) Nehru Yuvak Kendra, Dehra Dun; (21) SETU, Ahmedabad; (22) Centre for Education and Documentation, Bombay; (23) Centre for Tribal Conscientisation, Pune; and (24) National Institute of Social Work and Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar.

Though voluntary organisations are spread all over India and apparently no state is without them, yet it is in states like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Kerala where they are firmly established and have struck deep roots in the soil. Maharashtra and Gujarat have long traditions of social service, which accounts for the effectiveness of voluntary agencies. In Kerala, the Christian missions have been traditionally active.

PROBLEM-AREAS FOR VOLUNTARY ACTION

The voluntary organisations in India, at any rate a large number of them, are sporadic and intermittent in their work, which speaks for poor planning. For, as soon as the necessary momentum builds up and take-off stage is reached, inactivity descends on the village. It is, therefore, necessary that rural development work is planned on a continuous basis, taking care at the same time to see that the voluntary action does not drain away initiative, resourcefulness and self-help of the rural community, thereby making it perpetually dependent on external props. It must be borne in mind that nearly total voluntary action in India has been mounted by outsiders, who in the very scheme of things will have to leave, sooner or later. Voluntary agencies, therefore, should foster the growth of grassroots leadership--from the class composition view point also--and plan for the latter's succession in due course of time. Moreover, they have been generally content to function in accessible rural areas, and their programmes have been able to benefit the relatively better-off groups of the rural society. Their efforts, in other words, have succeeded in reaching the middle and small ranks of the rural society but not below. A sizable chunk of the rural population, especially in the remoter areas, suffers from acute poverty, but these have not yet been touched by voluntary efforts. Of course, voluntary agencies are apt to become more effective and vigorous if planning comes increasingly closer to the people. Particularly for what has come to be known as the tiny sector--which includes fisheries, animal husbandry, horticulture, etc.--planning must become locally-based.

The single most formidable problem of voluntary organisations is perhaps one of assured funding. A majority of them, lacking as they do an independent source of income and depending on external financial support, are perennially haunted by paucity as well as their

uncertainty of funds. Funding problem is so acute that many organisations are forced to drop mid-way even good on-going programmes good for the rural community and have to take up activities for which they may not have the requisite talent and which may not even have relevance and utility for the local people. Yet, they are lured to them simply because of the money tag attached. They, in short, remain re-active in their approach, not pro-active; and such a situation inhibits long-term planning. Although it is an announced policy of the government to give financial assistance to them, they get demoralised by the needlessly vexatious and delay-involving procedures of work observed in the bureaucracy. Even when a particular grant has been sanctioned, its release is held up unnecessarily, which has a paralysing effect on voluntary action.

FOREIGN FUNDING FOR VOLUNTARY ACTION

The real awakening for the present large-scale voluntary action for rural welfare has come from the world-wide relief efforts which have been initiated in India in 1965-66.⁹ There are, today, many voluntary organisations at the international level working for the rural cause, and the more prominent among them are OXFAM, Christian Aid, Catholic Relief Services, War on Want, Save the Children Fund, Terredes, Hommes, Bread for the World, Misereor, etc. The emerging concern at the global level for rural development is a welcome feature, the most appropriately, signifying oneness and indivisibility of mankind. As it is an important source of income, it deserves a somewhat detailed discussion.

The general scarcity of financial resources compels many voluntary organisations to look outside the country for funds to carry on their activities. Today, foreign donations have come to play a definite part in voluntary action in the country: "There is today more flow of foreign funds from foreign donor-agencies to non-governmental organisations in India than ever in the past".¹⁰ But foreign donations are not merely a matter of concern between the donor and the donee. The State in India cannot be bypassed in such transactions, though it offers two options to the donees. Voluntary organisations receiving foreign donations are under a statutory obligation to get themselves registered with the Home Ministry, and this status is accorded only on fulfilment of the terms and conditions laid down by the government. The requirement for registration is calculated to ensure that they "function in a manner consistent with the values of a sovereign democratic republic". This is provided for under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act passed in 1976, the controversial emergency year. As a result, a registered association is required to intimate

to the Central Government as to the amount of each foreign contribution received by it, the source from which and the manner in which the foreign contribution was received, and the purpose for which and the manner in which such foreign contribution was utilised. Organisations, not registered with the Home Ministry, however, do not stand totally debarred from accepting foreign donations. But they have to obtain the Home Ministry's clearance before accepting foreign assistance.

About 11,000 voluntary organisations are presently registered with the Home Ministry but only 7,000 of them are getting foreign contributions. In 1984, nearly Rs. 254 crore were ploughed into India in the form of contributions. It which rose to Rs. 350 crore in 1986, which signifies a steady increase in foreign contributions. This amount feeds several purposes of which rural development is but one part. The Government of India does not maintain a separate account of funds received for rural development only. The major donor countries are: USA (Rs. 57 crore), West Germany (Rs. 54 crore), Great Britain (Rs. 26 crore), Switzerland (Rs. 10 crore), Canada (Rs. 13 crore), Holland (Rs. 10 crore), and Italy (Rs. 19 crore). The principal recipient states in India are Tamil Nadu (Rs. 42 crore), Maharashtra (Rs. 30 crore), Andhra Pradesh (Rs. 25 crore), Kerala (Rs. 29 crore), West Bengal (Rs. 22 crore), Karnataka (Rs. 15 crore), Bihar (Rs. 12 crore), and Uttar Pradesh (Rs. 5.5 crore). One may, thus see that the four southern states--Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka--are getting the largest amount of foreign funds. This is because the principal beneficiaries of foreign donations are the Christian organisations which are more deeply entrenched in the south.

The donor organisations are content with providing financial aid and do not depute their personnel for execution or even overseeing. Implementation vests in the donee-agencies. The latter is also not subject to any extended accountability. The donors' concern for monitoring the progress of the assisted projects is restricted to calling for periodic returns and reports as well as audited account of money spent. The Home Ministry also exercises a measure of control by its power of launching investigations into questionable cases of misuse of foreign funds. Many voluntary agencies receive foreign donations running into six-digit figures and the Home Ministry makes it a point to keep an eye on such of them as are receiving huge funds. In case misuse of funds is proved, it can revoke the registration and bar the defaulting agencies from accepting foreign donations. This is not a mere theoretical threat. In 1986, registration of as many as 27 voluntary agencies was revoked for violation of rules and regulations governing acceptance of donations. Today,

diplomacy is a hydra-headed monster, and espionage is its integral and menacing part. Foreign funds do not carry the name of the real 'donors', and the presence of cover organisations cannot be altogether denied. Equally serious is the problem which proselytisers may pose for the vulnerable Third Worlders, the former's altruism being largely fake. The spies and the proselytisers are an obvious threat to voluntary action. Both these pose a danger and every care should be taken to ward them off.

CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE

Voluntary action has, today, shifted its focus from individuals to communities, and has acquired a level of complexity demanding the presence of varied skills in this sector. Earlier, training of personnel was not considered to be important. All this has apparently changed. Today, technology is becoming increasingly complex and agriculture has witnessed revolutionary changes even if these have not spread very widely and evenly. As such, voluntary action does demand availability of a wide range of expertise among voluntary agencies. Voluntary workers, today, are not completely untrained people in many agencies; they have expertise of the 'appropriate' level in one area or the other or they get trained in some skill before they take up their work. It is today almost universal that they are paid personnel, the only difference being that the salary is fixed on idealistic considerations. In the process, they are becoming increasingly professionalised. Indeed, a certain pattern of employment seems to be emerging in the voluntary sector. The personnel working in voluntary bodies are either in the younger age-group or the higher one. They join soon after their education for idealistic reasons when salary does not matter much in life. They, however, quit and take up regular, more paying employment as a career when their family and worldly liabilities increase. Again, they return to the voluntary world after their family responsibilities are over, presumably on retirement.

Mention may also be made of a trend among voluntary agencies, especially in states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh, to come together and form federations. This is a welcome trend, for in the process the voluntary agencies would feel a sense of solidarity, gather some clout and become politically influential. It is a common experience that the voluntary agencies are presently dogged by various problems. They are particularly harassed by the governmental agencies in the matter of granting funds. A common platform may act as a rural lobby and help them in many ways. Surprising as it may appear, voluntary action experiences threat from local landlords,

state level legislators, and power brokers, for their vested interests are getting exposed and power-base threatened. What is more, even local policemen, forest guards, etc., are up in arms against voluntary workers. It would do none any good if such threats are dismissed lightly. A federation may become a bulwork of support and take the bull by the horns.

Voluntary action for rural development, it must be stressed, is seldom undertaken by the rural poor themselves: it has drawn to its ranks outsiders who, naturally, bring to their tasks their individual orientations, interpretations, priorities and preferences. Many of them are politically committed, and rural betterment is viewed as part of their larger politics. Voluntary organisations must now break new ground and the rural poor must organise themselves politically to take up the challenge of self-betterment. The beneficiaries must be made conscious of the benefits intended for them. When organised, they would work for effective implementation of agrarian laws which, in many states, remain as mere show pieces, not meant for implementation.

Voluntary agencies must also learn to evaluate their goals, strategies and logistics from time to time and be prepared to change them when feedback so suggests. They must remain in tune with the environment which, one must note, is not static but fast changing.

Today, new demands are being mounted by the rural community, and mere motivation is hardly an adequate preparation for voluntary action. As development progresses, complexities increase and as a consequence the needs of the local community call for the presence of medical doctors, agronomists, horticulturists, veterinarians, and a variety of other experts in voluntary bodies. The future will compel the voluntary organisations to become more and more professional, and the trend towards this has already triggered itself.

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Environmentalism, Ecology and Voluntary Movement

HARSH SETHI

"IT LOOKS as if environmentalism is an idea whose time has come." So writes Anil Agarwal in *The State of India's Environment 1984-85*. "Newspapers give prominent display to environmental horror stories. Editorials demand better management of natural resources. Government statements on the need to preserve environment are now commonplace... There are new laws for control of air and water pollution and for the conservation of forests Party documents and party manifestos take care to mention the importance of environment."¹

And yet, Dunu Roy in the same volume remarks, "In the social system of India 1985, environmental myopia would appear to be a social disease".² Nothing expresses this better than "The Second Statement of Shared Concern" published in the same CSE volume, where the signatories, after congratulating themselves for the 'progress' made in the last three years, go on to lament:

The Bhopal disaster has stunned those responsible for pollution control, and put fear in the hearts of millions of industrial workers and people living near factories. But Bhopal is not the only disaster. Subtle and invisible processes continue to undermine human and natural resource base Satellite data has confirmed that India is indeed losing more than a million hectares of forests every year, something that forest departments have consistently and perversely sought to deny. All our hill and mountain eco-systems, the cradles of our life giving rivers are deteriorating rapidly. Even in heavy rainfall areas where forests should be in full bloom, the land is becoming a barren desert. Every day thousands of hectares of India's once rich biosphere slide into a vast wasteland; the only difference is that today the word 'wasteland' has become part of official vocabulary Environmental degradation threatens every Indian today.³

PROBLEMS OF ENVIRONMENT

Lets look at a number of other seeming paradoxes. Three Mile Island and Chernobyl notwithstanding, the Indian nuclear estate is merrily going on expanding itself. The leaders, the horrific details on radiation leaks at Tarapur apart, are confident that the Indian nuclear technology is the best, and that no such disaster can ever take place here. Notwithstanding dozens of 'scientific reports' on the ill-effects of monoculture plantations, particularly of certain species of eucalyptus, or the fact that thousands of eucalyptus saplings were uprooted by the Ryotu Sangha in Karnataka for having lowered the water table in the region, the National Wasteland Development Board and innumerable social forestry schemes continue to push the tree. N.S. Jodha's conclusive study on the role that village commons play in reducing the intensity of poverty notwithstanding, the State continues to classify the commons as wasteland and hand over large tracts to industry for commercial plantations.⁴ Even the Bhopal disaster, while resulting in many empty gestures against MNCs, has not forced our decision-making elite to reconsider the policies governing industrial production and location. Similarly, the State had no hesitation in disregarding the conclusion of the S.K. Roy Committee report, the three decade long struggle by the citizens of Tehri town, the hundreds of meetings, newspaper articles and editorials, even the fact that the Tehri Dam case is scheduled for hearing in the Supreme Court--and with reportedly little discussion in the Cabinet--gave the clearance for building the Tehri Dam under joint Indo-Soviet auspices. All this when we proudly accept the accolades in protecting the tiger or having covered nearly three per cent of our land mass under national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

This seeming schizophrenic response can be best understood in terms of the debate between environmentalism and ecology. Environmentalism in India, as Shiv Visvanathan forcefully argues, is essentially a statist strategy which, "views nature primarily as a resource or commodity, justifying the preservation of nature for reasons of trade, tourism or leisure. It fails to comprehend the disjunction between the degradation of nature in the production system with the need to conserve nature for the purposes of leisure or consumption". He further adds, "it attempts to humanize the violence of technological obsolescence through the museumization and preservation of endangered species, objects and people as spectacles or exhibits...Environmentalism is a technocracy's attempt to depoliticise the implications of ecologically inspired groups such as Chipko, Appiko, or even the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad".⁵ No

wonder, the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi saw no inconsistency between her love for endangered species and indifference to the genocidal possibilities of dams displacing people.

Prior to 1972, the year of the Stockholm Conference, when late Indira Gandhi made her famous statement on "poverty is the greatest pollutant", the concern about environment in the country, at least in the policy circles, was limited to the conservation of vanishing species. "Most of the people who raised these issues came from the elite class--shikaris, princes, and princelings of yore".⁶ The Stockholm Conference did significantly alter the terms of discourse, mainly by also directing attention to the inequities in the global pattern of resource consumption, but still the thrust of conservation remained.

At one end of the spectrum were those, concerned essentially with the rate of depletion of non-renewable resources--primarily oil. The Club of Rome report and others of a similar ilk argued, forcefully, that, at the present levels of consumption, most resources would vanish within the foreseeable future. Consequently, they advocated a zero-growth strategy. Expectedly, this thrust was seen by Third World nationalists as an international conspiracy to keep their countries backward. They felt that environmental concerns were only a reflection of the fears of the rich. "We will bother about these problems once we become like them", was the constant refrain heard.

The Third World nationalist elite shares the post-Cartesian positivist view of the miraculous powers of science and technology. It sees its key task as one of harnessing newer and more productive technologies to push up GNP growth rates and expand the base of the modern industrial economy. Sharing in many senses the Western view on environment, it sees the environmental problem essentially in terms of pollution control and depletion of non-renewable resources. Given its focus on despoilation and conservation, it fails to comprehend the organic link between nature and survival societies --the relationship that governs the life of most of our people. It fails to see that the major conflicts in our society are around the control, use, and nurturing of renewable natural resources--soil, water, and air--which have provided the basis of livelihood, life-styles and life of millions of our people.

Rarely is realised that the dominant development strategy through the onward march of industrialism alters the relationships between man and nature and man in a manner that threatens nature's survival economy. From the traditional fisherfolk on the country's western coast, who find the stocks and species of fish depleting as a result of incursion of mechanised trawling and modern nets; the forest dwellers, who find their access to traditional habitat restricted by

newer forest laws and take over of their lands, all in the name of protecting the environment; or the millions forcefully displaced by dams, canals, thermal projects, mining, expansion of industry in the countryside, the setting up of national parks, even military movement as in west Rajasthan--all over the country, it is the 'common man' who becomes the 'focus', in a double sense, of the march of progress. At one level, everything is done by invoking him, and at the other, it is he, more than anyone else who is seen as the stumbling block--be it through berating his superstitious ignorance or by invoking the link between overpopulation and environmental degradation.

This is not to argue that the 'people' do not ravage nature. Afterall, we can even invoke the famous burning down of the Khandava Vana in the epic Mahabharata to demonstrate that the treatment of nature as a hostile presence is not a peculiarly post 17th century Western phenomena. Closer to present times, the rapid decline of forest cover in Nepal, leading to a variety of ecological disturbances, can hardly be blamed only on the rapacious needs of industry. All that is being stressed is that modern industrial civilisations are inherently anti-ecological. Modern growth threatens the fragile balance evolved in different community and cultural patterns of living. Its gravity is such that the very people who had nurtured the natural environs are now forced to destroy them as part of their survival strategy. Reports prepared by the Social Work and Research Centre, Jhabua, show that in Alirajpur Block, Madhya Pradesh, it is the tribals who have not only cut down the forests, but have even uprooted the stumps in their search for fuelwood and house building materials. This has happened when they can easily comprehend that the destruction of the forests is leading to the region becoming a wasteland and that, in less than a decade, they will be unable to support their agricultural and pastoral activities.

At another level, different tendencies within the environment-ecology debates can be traced in the discussions on environmental audits. Most views on the ecological impact of developmental interventions have been limited to the managerial terrain, i.e., within the frame of the economists' view of externalities. The perspective is that a better understanding of the eco-system can and should lead to better planning such that negative externalities arising out of intervention in nature can be better managed, reduced or even finally eliminated. A few have, of late, begun to question the social implications of technology choice and implementation--that since the benefits of development are inequitably shared, it is only through a transition to a socialist polity that we can achieve a final solution to the class bias in the bearing of the costs of modernisation. In the transitory period, the focus then is on superior compensation and

rehabilitation packages. Rarely, however, are questions raised about the intrinsic violence done both to man and nature in this process--that the three L's of livelihood, life-styles, and life are organically linked to the ecological space in which they evolved.⁷ None of this is to argue that the first two premises of concern are either misleading or not required. Hardly, the point being made is that they remain confined to a single, possibly limited view, of the man-nature relationship.⁸

VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND THE SPECTRUM OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Where do the voluntary agencies fit into all this? The number of voluntary groups in India actively interested or--involved in environmental issues today is much larger than any other Third World country. And it does need to be admitted that except for conservation-oriented groups or those involved with urban beautification--nature clubs, the World Wildlife Fund, the local branches of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), etc.,--many of the grassroots groups do see their environmental concern as strongly linked to their activity concerning rural and urban poverty, social justice, inequality, civil liberties, rural development, appropriate technology and health.

If one was to roughly classify the environmental voluntary groups then we would have most of them involved in: (i) education and advocacy relating to the environment; (ii) opposing public or private sector projects that could be harmful to the environment or people dependent upon it; and (iii) activities directly aimed at solving environmental problems. Groups like the Centre for Science and Environment, Kalpavriksha, Delhi Science Forum, Lokayan, Bombay Natural History Society, etc., are good examples of the first. In the second category, we would have dozens of groups that came up in the wake of Bhopal disaster or those that oppose the present forest and wasteland policies or the big dams, nuclear stations, etc. Finally, we have agencies, like the Appropriate Technology Group, Lucknow; Magan Sangrahalaya, Wardha; ASTRA, Bangalore; MCRC, Madras; or the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal (DGSM) in Chamoli, which are involved in generating and helping to put into social practice technologies that are ecologically (not only environmentally) benign. This is not to argue that many of the groups of one variety do not get involved in other issues. After all, we also have the example of the Kerala Shashtra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) which has involved thousands of people--from students, teachers, and professionals to peasants, workers, and fisherfolk in a "scientific debate and practice" in activities ranging from bringing out books on knowing

the environment, opposing the Silent Valley Project, fighting the pollution in the Cheleyer river, or extending support to the fisher-folk's struggle. In addition to these better known groups, there are hundreds of smaller efforts operating in their own localities--doing everything from planting useful trees to resuscitating local tanks and bunds.

The repertoire of strategies used by the voluntary sector too is quite impressive. From educational campaigns, using the entire media spectrum--books and reports, pamphlets and booklets, newspaper, articles, posters, street plays, audio-visuals and films, to public meetings, protest strategies varying from mobilising and organising local population, petitioning in courts and government, building networks within the voluntary sector, with political parties, or with concerned specialists--to generating national focus on environmental issues relating to forests, wasteland, dams, pollution, agricultural inputs, destruction of gene diversity--all have at various levels of sophistication and effectively been addressed to by the voluntary movement. Possibly the high point of all this activity was the stopping of the proposed Forest Policy in 1982. Even today, the debate and action on the design, location and social impact of large dams ranging from Tehri and Vishnuprayag in the Garhwal Himalayas, to the Narmada Valley Project, the Munnar Dam in Kerala, the Bhopal patnam and Inchampalli Dams on the Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra borders, or the Koel-Karo Dam in Bihar is a live and a concerted one. In brief, through an array of strategies, voluntary agencies are doing for the people what the government cannot do; telling them how the environment is being destroyed, who is destroying it, and what can be done about it. While the government agencies end up blaming the poor for environmental degradation, the voluntary agencies stress the over-consumption of the elite, the effects of government policy, and exhort the people to appreciate alternative development policies.⁹ In fact, given the myopia and cussedness of the government and the political parties, it almost appears that it is the voluntary agencies alone, who are active in a pro-people sense on the environmental front.

This protest and campaign work--often more visible--should not blind us to the effort being made in developing and demonstrating alternatives. Whether it is the work on go-bar-gas plants, solar cookers, smokeless chulahs, windmills, alternate building technologies, mini-hydel plants, irrigation techniques or on natural farming methods--dozens of voluntary agencies have been experimenting with alternative technologies. The most spectacular example is possibly that of the DGSM in Chamoli, where the mixed-specie tree plantation scheme evolved by and implemented with the participation

of the local people, stands as a glaring contrast to the official efforts at afforestation.

How then do we assess and relate to this wide and often exciting spectrum of environmental activities? Alternatively, how is one to assess the overall mood of pessimism which has overtaken the voluntary sector--a feeling that an increased all-round activity of experimenting with alternatives, generating new research and popular education material, initiating campaigns or petitioning in courts and governments, while undoubtedly worthwhile, is really one of fighting a losing battle. This feeling is most sharply symbolised in the difficulty in getting even the network, that got activated in the 1982 campaign against the Forest Policy, excited about the proposed policy in 1987. Or the fact that the scoop in publishing important extracts from the proposed Water Policy in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, a few months back, has not generated even a single response. This, when the proposed Water Policy will affect far many more people, and adversely, then the proposed Forest Policy of 1982 would have done. To understand the 'distance' between the enhanced activity and the feeling of pessimism, we need to turn both to the nature of voluntary agencies, as also to the premises of their understanding about the man-nature relationship.

PROBLEMS OF VOLUNTARY GROUPS

The voluntary sector is a mixed bag of groups and individuals of different size, ideologies, areas of operation and concern, funding sources and effectivity. The sub-sector of environmental groups, thus, shares all the strengths and limitations of the voluntary sector as a whole.¹⁰

Within the environmental sector, the first problem that the voluntary groups face is that of lack of expertise and understanding. Ecological science is of recent origin and there is an overall lacunae of scholarship and understanding. Thus; notwithstanding the growth in the number of 'counter-experts' and the conscious forging of links between the voluntary groups and universities and research institutions, lack of data and understanding end up diluting many of the arguments that the voluntary groups come up with. Given their limited budgets, most groups, individually or as part of a network, find it difficult to either retain expertise or carry out environmental impact analysis. The fact that most data, of whatever quality, lies with the government, which hiding behind the garb of confidentiality, makes it near impossible to put together a convincing argument. The Bhopal disaster is a case in point, where even the meteorological data on wind speeds and direction so central to any

attempt at computing the numbers likely to be affected by the MIC leakage was denied. No official institution was willing to test samples of water, plant life, food, etc. In such a situation, where the Union Carbide and the Union Government could marshal "scientific evidence and expertise", the ill-equipped and fragmented voluntary groups could do little. The wonder is that they did manage to do what they did.¹¹

The size and scattered nature of voluntary groups causes another problem. Even if a worthwhile case can be made, the effective strength of a group or even a network of groups to carve out a "sympathetic hearing space" in an extremely hostile environment is severely limited. Many of the protest efforts are labelled as anti-development and anti-progress if not anti-national; certified by their opponents as products of an anti-diluvian Luddite world-view, branded as agents of Western imperialism, and then sought to be co-opted or crushed. Innumerable examples can be cited to demonstrate that even asking for rigorous implementation of the various environmental legislations is no guarantee that the State will not come down with a heavy hand. In fact, the relationship of the voluntary groups with officialdom turns out to be extremely ambivalent--support to some agencies on some issues, and a neglect, if not a snuffing out, of others.

Even the strategy of petitioning the courts through invoking the provisions of public interest litigation often serves little purpose. Forgetting for a moment the inherent limitations of court procedure--time, money, etc.--or that judgements are not necessarily implemented or even that law and justice are not synonymous categories--the court-based strategy may not even open up a public debate. As mentioned earlier, the Tehri Dam, though still listed for hearing in the Supreme Court, was given clearance by the Government of India only a few months back. Similarly, the conflict on continuation of limestone mining in the reserved forest areas of the Doon Valley, even with the court petition being based on a study carried out under the aegis of the Department of Environment, did not lead to any positive action by the government. In fact, the few instances of positive intervention by the State can be directly traced to the interest shown by the highest political authority in the land.¹² In all other cases, 'success' has only come through a militant and collective resistance by the affected people, and that too in areas where the urgency shown by the State in its development thrust is somewhat limited. Thus, while the Koel-Karo project has been successfully stalled to date, efforts in the Singrauli region to resist the development of the coalmines, superthermal power complexes, and associated industrialisation continues to be pushed through. The

fact that well over 150,000 people have been forcefully displaced more than once, is not seen as an issue of concern.¹³

All these leave the voluntary groups in a somewhat difficult position. Lack of effective concern/sensitisation in the decision-making elite, lack of the data and expertise to open up a meaningful public debate, the relative inefficacy of the various environmental legislations and the law implementing agencies force the few voluntary groups which have an organic mass base into a mode of protest and confrontation. Whether it is the Singhbhum Ekta Group in Koel-Karo or the Citizen's Committee in Balliapal, what has worked, at least transitorily, is collective resistance and non-cooperation. The fact that this opens up the groups to a charge of being anti-development and anti-national only makes things worse.

The issue in a final sense is not one merely of the tactics and strategy of mobilisation and organisation--the indication we may get if we focus only on questions relating to the size, effectivity, budgets or expertise of the agencies. Rather it is to understand that it is one of the politics of natural resource conflicts in the widest sense--of who has a right to decide what use is to be made of which resource, by whom, and for what purpose. Struggles over natural resources are only partly related to issues of distributive justice. More fundamentally, they relate to our understanding of man and nature.

To put it in another way, why is it that the costs of development can be so easily wished away, either as historically necessary or to be responded to at an undetermined future date? Why is it that the charge of being anti-science, anti-development, even anti-national finds such a ready resonance in the mainstream mind and culture? Is it that those affected are part of the margins of our society--dalits, tribals, women--who are not to be taken seriously? Is it that what matters is immediate material gain, and that environmental effects take a long time in surfacing? Or is it that in our (to be read by the elites) acceptance of the dominant development paradigm--consolidated through the desire to rapidly approach the prevailing Western standards of consumption--dissent, particularly based on a cultural terrain that is seen by the elite as backward, can be remorselessly and ruthlessly suppressed. The relationship of a people to their environment from which is drawn their culture, the meaning they give to life, is a notion totally incomprehensible--to be dismissed as romantic, archaic, and harking back to the past.¹⁴

The real problem that anyone working on the issue of ecology, thus, has to confront, and this includes the voluntary groups, is the mindset formed by the post-Cartesian worldview--where modern science, the reason of State, development and progress all are read as

coextensive.¹⁵ It is not insignificant that even a letter to the Prime Minister signed by six prominent citizens appealing that the Narmada project be reconsidered, opened up such a barrage of hostile criticism in the Gujarat media, that no local person was willing to speak up on the issue.¹⁶

The voluntary groups are, thus, faced with a seemingly irredeemable situation. Lauded for their undoubtedly leading role in sensitising policy-makers and public alike to the gross ill effects of ill-planned and insensitive developmental intervention; wooed for their greater ability in mobilising and organising people for participation in the official eco-development projects, they face a hostile presence if they step out of line. None of this is to argue that their role is confined to mere tinkering or the provision of alternatives. The different voluntary initiatives do need to be given due credit for opening out, albeit in a limited manner, a Pandora's box of concerns that the State will find difficult to bottle up, and they do need to keep up the pressure through these activities. Nevertheless, given their relatively greater organic links with the 'rejects' of the development process, they need to more creatively explore the thinking and debate on development alternatives in the country, particularly with respect to production and consumption choices.

For this, there is much to learn from the Chipko Movement in the Himalayas. A movement, whose roots can be traced back to the twenties of this decade when the first major struggle against the Forest Policy enunciated by the British took place. Chipko today represents a mass involvement of common people which has struggled successfully against commercial felling of green trees, for local use and control of community resources, against lime-stone mining, against the Tehri Dam, against alcoholism and drinking of tea--all without a clearly recognisable organisation and leadership directing it. It involves Gandhians, Marxists, as also other political shades, but its real strength is derived from a building up of the local cultural texture--a cosmic view which looks upon forests not as a resource for commercial exploitation but as bearers of fresh air, water, and soil. It is the "culture and community orientation axis" that gives Chipko its unique strength, such that even in the final decades of the twentieth century, we have an ongoing and living example of practising alternatives.¹⁷

It is by learning from the experience of Chipko or the Jharkhand Movement in the Santhal Parganas or even the water sharing experiments of the Pani Panchayat--just to name a few--that the voluntary groups can extend their undoubtedly valuable work. Only by delving deep in the still alive cultural traditions that exist outside the

ambit of mainstream statist and technicist development discourse, can the voluntary movement keep the option of exploring social alternatives open. There is, in a manner of speaking, no one else.

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Citizens for Clean Waterways : A Case Study of Citizen Participation in Environmental Protection

PAUL P. APPASAMY AND DEBORAH THIAGARAJAN

TAMIL NADU Centre of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has been spearheading a campaign to clean up the polluted waterways of Madras City. The three major waterways of Madras--the Cooum, the Adyar and the Buckingham Canal--have been severely polluted by large quantities of sewage, sullage, garbage, industrial wastes and other urban drainage. In addition, flooding occurs during times of heavy rainfall resulting in damage to the property and health of more than 30,000 low-income households who live on the banks. The problem of pollution of the Cooum and the Buckingham Canal and the need to clean up these waterways, has been discussed by the government and the public for more than 50 years.¹ It was not until 1967, that the government made a serious attempt to improve the physical appearance of the Cooum. The Cooum Improvement Scheme, which cost Rs. 2.29 crore, was implemented over a 5-year period (1967-72). But, the basic problem of pollution entering the river from different sources was not seriously addressed to for various reasons. As a result, the water quality of the river has progressively deteriorated over the last 20 years. The potential benefits of a clean river in terms of recreation and tourism remain untapped. In addition, the gross pollution has damaged the valuable estuarine ecosystems of the Cooum and the Adyar, and also poses a potential threat to public health and welfare.² Therefore, INTACH launched a major programme, the "Citizens for Clean Waterways" campaign to seek broad public support for this project.

Conceptual Framework

The Centre for Science and Environment reports that the number of voluntary groups in India, actively interested or involved in environmental issues, is larger than in any Third World country and probably matches the numbers found in Western countries.³ A citizens' report⁴ in this regard identifies three major constraints faced by most voluntary agencies. First, there is often a lack of

trained personnel to carry out in-depth technical and economic analyses, although they sometimes receive assistance from universities and other scientific institutions. Second, is the lack of access to authentic data from official sources on projects and programmes which have environmental implications. Third, is the lack of statutory support and judicial sympathy for efforts of voluntary groups willing to fight agents responsible/environmental pollution.⁵

INTACH operates within these constraints and limitations, as do most voluntary groups involved in environmental protection. However, INTACH has the advantage of operating in a major urban centre, i.e., Madras, in terms of access to resources and expertise of various public and private institutions. Although comparatively a newcomer in the field, yet it has successfully utilised many of these institutions to develop a broad-based programme of citizens' participation.

The success of a citizens' participation programme can be assessed in a number of ways. However, in programmes that deal with technically complex issues (as is the case in urban environmental protection), Krinsky makes the following recommendations:

1. Public participation must make a real difference--citizens should obtain access to the decision-making process at points where they can make a difference in the outcome.
2. Participation should broaden options, not narrow them--integrating more diverse interests into the decision-making process should widen the scope of possibilities by capitalising on the imagination of many different minds.
3. Those individuals, communities or regions which are asked to bear the greatest risk should have a weighted input into the decision-making process. Specifically, Rawl's Theory of Justice could be employed, i.e., in a society of unequal distribution, decisions should not make the least advantaged worse off.
4. When a technology (or project) selectively impacts a community, such that its residents bear special risks, then maximising local options for regulation should be consistent with the weighted input principle.⁶

INTACH's Organisational framework

We will use some of Krinsky's principles in evaluating the success of INTACH's public involvement efforts later on. Let us now discuss the institutional framework within which INTACH operates before going on to the specific details of the Clean Waterways campaign.

INTACH is a national voluntary agency, with head office in Delhi and chapters in every state. The society acts as a pressure group to

preserve India's both natural and cultural heritage. Founded in January 1984, it has grown steadily and now has 44 separate chapters. Its funding is mainly from a large bequest made by Charles Wallace, a British philanthropist, and from Government of India.

The operating procedures of INTACH allow the chapters great freedom in choosing projects in the fields of culture and environment, relevant to the local and regional population. Once a project has been selected, usually through suggestions of each local INTACH committee (an honorary locally selected committee), the Delhi office supports that project financially with seed money only. Where necessary, as in the Cooum project, the head office also provides an honorary director from Delhi who liaises between the local project and Delhi. In the various chapters, specific project coordinators, specialists and researchers as well as secretarial staff are employed to see that there is continuity and follow-through on major projects. However, INTACH functions primarily with voluntary help and almost all its administrators, at both chapters and head office levels, are honorary. One of its major functions is mobilising and organising public for voluntary service. The organisation also seeks to work with the state government as many projects need both local and state government cooperation.

Clean Waterways Campaign

The material given here has been summarised from INTACH-Tamil Nadu's March 1987 newsletter. INTACH conducted a seminar on June 14, 1986, on the theme "River Cooum--Let it be a Resource", in association with the University of Madras, Institution of Engineers (India) and the Madras Environmental Society. Papers were presented by environmentalists and scientists on various aspects of pollution of the Cooum River. The seminar concluded with a list of recommendations to the Tamil Nadu Government with regard to cleaning up the river.

Next, a public meeting was held on June 29, 1986, to launch a public campaign. The purpose was to seek public support for government action through a massive signature campaign. The goal of the signature campaign was to raise Rs.10 lakh through 10 lakh signatures of individuals, each contributing Rupee one. The campaign has a prominent industrialist as the Chairman and a former Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu as the Treasurer.

Other public activities undertaken, as part of the "Citizen for Clean Waterways" campaign, were a boat rally and a mass rally. The boat rally was sponsored by the Madras Chamber of Commerce. Boats were taken out on the Cooum by all the environmental groups of the city. Clean water was symbolically poured into the Cooum. A mass

rally attended by over 2,000 people marched on Madras City's major arterial road, Mount Road (Anna Salai) on November 22, 1986. The rally was organised in cooperation with the National Service Scheme (NSS) of Madras University, and was attended by students of colleges and schools as well as by social service organisations. The boat rally and the march were well covered by major newspapers and television. These activities were designed as 'media events' to sensitise the general public to the problem.

INTACH has also taken the campaign to schools and colleges. Exhibitions of posters and photographs on the Cooum have been held at a number of schools and colleges in Madras City. A group of 10 students at the Madras School of Social Work took up the "Clean Waterways" campaign as their field work project. Also, a workshop for 60 NSS volunteers was held, to train them to speak to students in schools. A slogan contest and a skit contest were organised with the Cooum River as the theme.

In December 1986, the Tamil Nadu Department of Tourism gave INTACH the tourism pavillion at the Trade Fair (at Island Grounds) to develop as an environmental pavillion for children. The help of the Crocodile Bank was obtained to develop exhibits that stress natural environment. Regular films on nature and wildlife were also shown during the Trade Fair. In May 1987, after the fair closed, the pavillion was used for a summer camp on environmental education for children from corporation schools. The pavillion will continue to be used as a training centre for school children during week-ends for the rest of the year.

Apart from these environmental awareness and educational efforts, the campaign received a major stimulus, when four INTACH members were nominated to a government task force, chaired by the Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Working group of the task-force under the chairmanship of the Commissioner and Secretary (Environmental Control), was asked to produce a report on the measures needed to clean up the waterways in Madras City. The working group delegated the responsibility to following sub-committees: (1) Sub-committee on colonies and encroachments on the banks of the waterways; (2) Sub-committee on sewerage and stormwater management; and (3) Sub-committee on future uses of the waterways. The INTACH representatives participated on each of the sub-committees in order to provide input into different aspects of management of the waterways. The sub-committees produced draft reports which were provided to the Secretary (Environmental Control), who consolidated them into a final report which was submitted to the Chief Secretary. The report is now under consideration by the State and Central governments.

Campaign's Preliminary Evaluation

The campaign was launched in June 1986. The number of signatures obtained so far is approximately 54,937 (or 5.4 per cent of the projected figure of 10 lakh). Similarly, the funds received so far amounts to Rs. 79,681 (or 7.9 per cent of the projected figure of Rs.10 lakh). Thus, the programme has made a significant beginning, but will have to be sustained over at least a 10-year period to achieve some of the stated goals. However, the goals may have been ambitious, and may have to be scaled down if the same level of interest cannot be sustained.

The level of awareness on water pollution in the general public is relatively high as measured by an attitudinal survey done at the Trade Fair pavillion. Most of the respondents were well aware of the pollution of the three waterways--the Cooum, the Adyar and the Buckingham Canal. They also showed a high awareness of the sources of pollution such as sewerage, sullage, industrial wastes, etc., and, most of them felt that something must be done to clean up the waterways. There was comparatively less awareness of the relationship of water pollution and disease. While most of the people knew that contaminated water could lead to various diseases, few felt the need to take precautions, such as boiling and filtering.⁷

While the relatively high-level of awareness of water pollution is not directly attributable to INTACH's programmes, it is nevertheless true that the Trade Fair pavillion and other environmental education efforts have had some impact on the public. The key to ultimate success in this area is to sustain the same level of interest in this issue.

At this point, it would be useful to evaluate the campaign with public participation criteria suggested by Krinsky:

1. The involvement of citizens in a government task force on cleaning the waterways was a major success story of the campaign. The traditional decision-making process in the area of water management tends to be relatively closed to the general public. The fact that INTACH representatives were allowed to provide input to the sub-committee, and thereby to the final report was a clear indication of access to the decision-making process. However, the involvement of INTACH has not extended beyond this stage at present.

The various ministers of the Tamil Nadu Government have recently raised the issue of cleaning the waterways at different forums. They have also talked about the need to receive assistance from the Centre or from international agencies. However, there has been no public discussion of the details of

such a programme.

2. While various opinions were solicited by the task force, no effort was made to analyse the various options. Implementing agencies were asked to provide a set of recommendations which were incorporated into the final report. No serious effort was made by the task force to identify and analyse merits of different options. Although INTACH representatives made strenuous efforts to raise discussion on various aspects of the programme, yet the chairman was more interested in bringing closure to the discussion by limiting the options that would be contained in the final report.
3. The people who would most immediately be affected by a clean-up effort would be the slum dwellers, who live on the banks of the three waterways. Although, they did not have their own representative on the task force, their interests were represented, at least in part, by the Chief Engineer, Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board. Also, one of the sub-committee made a serious attempt to study the issue and, produced a detailed draft report, which was incorporated in the final report.
4. As mentioned in the previous earlier, the impact on the slum dwellers was considered by the sub-committee. However, no effort has been made so far to solicit the views of the potentially affected communities (around 30,000 households) regarding various options. In case of slum-dwellers, who live on the banks of the Buckingham Canal, any effort at improvement of the waterway would necessitate relocation.⁸ The relocation of these households would be expensive, both economically and politically. While various schemes have been considered by government agencies, the issue has not been taken up for public debate because it is deemed to be politically sensitive. However, no real solution is possible without participation of these low income households.

As is the case with many voluntary agencies in India, INTACH has been relatively more successful in environmental education and awareness programmes than in affecting the process of decision-making. The environment pavillion at the Trade Fair was successfully used as a summer camp, with excellent participation by students from corporation schools. Many of these students were from low-income families, who had not been exposed to environmental topics. Further plans are underway for training teachers from these schools, so that they can take the message themselves to their students. However, it is vital that INTACH continues to seek access to the decision-making process. Only then can it achieve its stated goal of seeing that an integrated

remedial programme is implemented for cleaning the waterways of Madras City.

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Voluntary Agencies for Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes— Their Role and Function

L.M. PRASAD

THE SCHEDULED CASTES and the Scheduled Tribes are at the lowest strata of the Indian society. For generations, most of these communities were neglected by the rest of the nation. While the British Government isolated the Scheduled Tribes from the rest of the nation, the relationship between the Scheduled Castes and the rest of the country was marked by aloofness. At present, while the Scheduled Castes comprise about 15 per cent of the country's population, their proportion among the poverty groups is much larger and they represent the lowest deciles. We, thus, find that 52 per cent of Scheduled Caste Workers are agricultural labourers; 28 per cent are cultivators, mostly small and marginal farmers, share-croppers, tenants, etc.; and almost all primary leather workers are from the Scheduled Castes. In the western region, almost all weavers are from the Scheduled Castes and in the eastern region almost all fishermen are from the Scheduled Castes. The so-called 'unclean' occupations which help to keep society in such state of cleanliness as it is found in professions like scavenging and sweeping, flaying, tanning, etc., are almost entirely left to the Scheduled Castes. In the urban areas, a large proportion of rickshaw pullers, cart pullers, other unorganised non-agricultural wage labourers and civic sanitation workers belong to the Scheduled Castes. These categories account for almost all the Scheduled Castes in the country; they are amongst the poorest of those who live below the poverty line. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that two-thirds of all bonded labourers are from the Scheduled Castes, according to a recent study.¹

Looking at the literacy levels, we find that the literacy rate among Scheduled Castes, as recorded in the 1971 census, is only 14.7 per cent as against the all-India average of 33.80 per cent (excluding Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes). In some States, the general level of literacy continues to be much lower than the all-India level of the Scheduled Castes. Some of the communities have hardly any educated person among them. The condition of education

amongst the women is even more unsatisfactory. There are several districts in the country where the literacy among Scheduled Castes women is as low as one per cent going down even to 0.2 per cent.²

The position of the Scheduled Tribes is not less glaring. The Scheduled Tribes population in the country has risen to 5.38 crore as per 1981 census. It can be reasonably assumed that over 85 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribe families belong to the category below the poverty-line.³ They are likely to cover a population of over 4.25 crore.

This situation clearly explains that the Scheduled Castes are dependent upon their exploiters for their sustenance and are largely denied opportunities to develop capability of attaining an independent livelihood. The tribals, who have remained somewhat aloof, have to be integrated in the mainstream of national life. Thus, to break the vicious circle and isolation, the crying need for these communities is development. In fact, now there seems to be a genuine desire in the country to atone for the mistakes of the past. The general population has now realised what President Kennedy observed, "if a Government cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich".

It goes without saying that it is too difficult a task for government agencies to rectify the mistakes of the past centuries and to develop them at par with other sections of the Indian society. For development of these vulnerable sections we need both the society and the State.

ROLE OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Democracy allows scope for the individual to undertake action in a national society, independent of the State. The "private action, that is to say, action not under the direction of any authority wielding power of the State, therefore, is called voluntary action".⁴

On voluntary action for public purposes, Lord Beveridge has observed as follows: "A voluntary organisation, properly speaking, is an organisation which, whether its workers are paid or unpaid, is initiated and governed by its own members without external control".⁵

Definitions given by Mary Morris and Modeline Roof are also similar. Modeline Roof emphasises in addition that these voluntary organisations should depend, in part at least, upon funding support from voluntary sources. On motivation for voluntary work, Mary Morris observes, "To lead a full life, most people need more than they can find in their work or home. They need to live as members of groups doing things for themselves and their fellow members or for the benefit of others outside the group. The urge to act in groups

is fundamental to man".⁶

Thus, voluntary action is a form of organising activities supporting, strengthening and helping to develop work to meet all types of legitimate needs of individuals and groups in a society.

Voluntary agencies are supposed to be potentially superior to official agencies in three respects: (1) their workers can be more sincerely devoted to the task of reducing the sufferings of the poor than government staff; (2) they can have a better rapport with the rural poor than government employees; and (3) since they are not bound by rigid bureaucratic rules and procedures, they can operate with greater flexibility, they can readjust their activities quickly and continuously as they learn from experience.⁷ We can add two more points: (1) Voluntary agencies' efforts are more economical than the government departments; and (2) they can motivate more public participation in development efforts than the government departments.

Voluntary Agencies and Harijan and Tribal Development before Independence

Voluntary action has a long tradition in India. The great forests of India have, for thousands of years, attracted men who desired to retire from the world and devote themselves to spiritual thinking. They were, we are told, kind and gentle to the animals and we may be sure that they were equally kind and gentle to the ancestors of the tribal people of today amongst whom they lived. In fact, when societies of the world were riven with tribes and groups, India had her Manu, Yagnavalkya, Kautilya and Vyasa. Their approach to social problems was undoubtedly different. They thought of social security on a decentralised basis. The time, however, was not yet ripe for an organised system of education and health services.⁸

Coming to the British period, we find that they left uncared the Scheduled Castes and isolated the Scheduled Tribes to keep them away from the national movement. Development of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, to enable them to take advantage of the technological order of the modern civilisation, was never a matter of concern for the colonial administration. During that time it was the exclusive burden of the non-official agencies to look after the welfare of the economically, socially and politically backward tribal and Harijan communities. Among the tribal communities, mention may be made of the humanitarian missionaries of various denominations. The missionaries were the pioneers in education. They opened the first hospital in the tribal areas. Some of them set a shining example by their care of lepers. Their devotion and self-sacrifice in the remotest hills and forests are cited even today as examples of ideal social workers.

Undoubtedly, the missionaries led the way in certain matters which all workers, official and non-official, would do well to follow. In many cases, by their translations of the Bible, they first gave form to the tribal dialects, by the mastery of which they gained much influence on them. Secondly, once they went to a place they usually stayed there for a very long time and some of them actually took vows never to return to their own land. Thirdly, they were always accessible and friendly. They were among the first to inspire the tribal people with the idea of progress and to awaken them to a sense of their rights.⁹

Historically speaking, the American missionaries started schools in Naga villages as early as 1830. They also taught villagers the technique of cultivating tea. Coming to Chotanagpur (Bihar), we find that the advent of Christianity dates back to 1845 when four Lutheran missionaries sent by one father J.E. Gossner of Berlin reached Ranchi. Between 1895 and 1914 the Lutheran Church expanded considerably and alongwith the conversion work, they opened High Schools for both the boys and girls. Dispensaries were also opened at Ranchi, which rendered great service to the Christian as well as the non-Christian public.¹⁰

The Roman Catholic Missionaries are comparatively late comers to Ranchi and the first organised mass conversion began with the advent of Fr. Constant Lievens in 1885. In the beginning, Christian Missionaries confined their activities to purely evangelical work but they got little success. It was, therefore, realised later that the only way to attract the tribals was to defend their interests, specially regarding their rights of land tenure and land services. This news of their help in temporal affairs spread among the poor natives, who began coming to them in large numbers for consultation and for redressal of their grievances. After the missionaries took a few cases at Ranchi and won them, they established their reputation. S.C. Roy has rightly pointed out that in addition to helping the tribal peasants against the land grabbing devices of the non-tribal landlords, the Christian missionaries also provided them shield against the exploitation by the money lenders.¹¹ The initial credit goes to a prominent Catholic Missionary, Father Hoffman, for taking concrete steps to establish Chotanagpur Catholic Mission Cooperative Society in 1909. It had Central Cooperative Bank at Ranchi but it converted the whole of Chotanagpur, into several circles in different mission stations, which were again sub-divided into several units as working centres.

The Christian missionaries also took active interest in spreading education among the tribals and improving their health and living conditions. In the tribal belts of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra

Pradesh and other parts of India also, they carried on humanitarian activities on a considerable scale.

When the freedom struggle, launched by the national leaders, became stronger, they realised their concern for involving the tribals in their efforts in order to integrate them in the mainstream of the national life.

Under the impact of the Gandhian age--a very prominent member of the Servants of India Society, late Thakkar Bapa laid the foundation of another service agency. Like other pioneering projects, this also had a small beginning. He established in 1921, an Ashram at Mirakhedi in Panchmahal District and the Bhil Seva Mandal at Dohad in Gujarat--then a part of the old Bombay Presidency. By single-minded devotion and hard work, he established 21 institutions in various parts of the country, three each in Andhra and what is now the Madhya Pradesh, two each in Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh, and one each in Kerala, Madras and Rajasthan. There was a magic in his personality. He could create workers, attract workers and hold on to the workers--which is the secret of retaining the workers. Shri Dhebar rightly opined that the history of a quarter of a century of dogged endeavour on the part of this singularly quiet and dedicated yet principled personality is a romance of social work in India.¹²

Activities of Thakkar Bapa and his band, prior to Independence, were mostly concentrated in the field of education and in some places in the field of public health. A noteworthy beginning was also made in the field of cooperation in Bombay Presidency.

The first fruitful effort for voluntary action was made in the tribal belt of Bihar with the establishment of a service centre named Seva Kendra in the year 1940. The immediate incentive for improving the socio-economic conditions of the tribes of Chotanagpur is linked with the holding of the All-India Congress at Ramgarh, 28 miles from Ranchi in 1939. The important national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Ballabbhbai Patel and many others, who met in the tribal setting, were deeply impressed to undertake the cause of development of the primitive and backward communities not only of Bihar but also of the whole country. As a part of the programme of freedom fight, it was emphasised to take up the cause of the socio-economic development of tribals and Harijans. The work was immediately started in Chotanagpur by Dr. Rajendra Prasad and his young collaborator Sri Narayanjee. In the thick tribal belt at Gumla at a distance of 40 miles south-west of Ranchi, they started a centre named Seva Kendra. Originally, they mobilised persons to take lessons in literacy in the night and to work in the Khadi Production Centre. In order to run these two

programmes, financial help was made available from the savings of the Reception Committee of Ramgarh Congress.¹³

In Madhya Pradesh, the Banabasi Seva Mandal was registered in 1945-46. At present, its head office, situated at Maharajpur in the Mandla District and from the very inception it has laid a great emphasis on the spread of education among the tribals. In addition to the educational programmes, the organisation was managing one agricultural farm, three cooperative societies, one mobile dispensary, one Gram Ikai Kendra, one Lok Karya Kshetra, and one Panchayat Raj Prashikshan Kendra.

Voluntary action, thus, in the beginning was motivated by religious consideration, people used to serve fellowmen in order to please God and acquire punya. Voluntary action also took place outside the religious channels, especially during calamities like floods and famines. This system of mitigating problem of indigency by the particular norms of mutuality of obligations (as manifested through individual philanthropy and religious charity) had been continuing in India right through the 18th century. The growth of residential institutions, as instruments of organised and sustained care, is a 19th century phenomenon in the field of voluntary action in India. Likewise, development of the realistic humanistic tradition in this field is attributed to the early decades of the present century. Organisations like Harijan Sevak Sangh, Nai Talim Sangh and Leper Society were later manifestations of this trend.¹⁴

Policy on Voluntary Action in Post-Independence Period

It was only after 1947 that voluntary organisations had anything to do with the government. The government, on its part, not only started operating some programmes of social welfare directly but also started a programme of financial assistance to voluntary agencies. In the First Five-Year Plan, a provision of Rs. four crore was made for assistance to voluntary organisations as these were found to be capable of "dealing with social problems for which the State cannot provide in sufficient measures" (First Five-Year Plan).¹⁵

In 1953, the Central Social Welfare Board was created with an allocation of 40 million rupees for grants-in-aid to voluntary organisations. This was a pioneering institutional arrangement for mobilising voluntary effort by the government. In 1954, welfare advisory boards were created in States. With this, the concept of mobilising voluntary effort was decentralised and further decentralisation took place in the community development and panchayati raj institutions.¹⁶

Even before the government had come into the picture, the Andhra Mahila Sabha, first in Madras and later in Hyderabad, demonstrated the immense potentialities for mobilising voluntary effort through

the zeal, devotion and sincerity of thousands of workers who were not at all career minded but dedicated to service.¹⁷

In the Third Five-Year Plan, importance of the role of voluntary agencies for the successful implementation of our plans was reiterated as follows:

For a developing country which cherishes its democratic value, the people's part in the attainment of these objectives is of supreme importance. The peaceful struggle for freedom and tradition of constructive work associated with it had marked out for the people a decisive role in the tasks of planned development initiated 10 years ago. It is evident, however, that the possibilities of full involvement of the people in the processes of change and growth are not being realised to a sufficient degree.¹⁸

Discussing people's participation on an ideological level, the plan document found it necessary to give it a concrete shape and observed:

In the activities in which official agencies are engaged, there is a large sphere in which the cooperation of the people can be sought and secured to achieve a degree of success which would otherwise not be possible. These tasks should be identified precisely and the obligations and responsibilities of the people in relation thereto made known clearly. The concept of public cooperation is related in its wider aspect to the much larger sphere of voluntary action in which the initiative and organisational responsibility rest completely with the people and their leaders. So vast are the unsatisfied needs of the people that all the investments in the public and private sectors together can, at this stage, only make a limited provision for them.¹⁹

Thus, government, in the first two decades after Independence, adopted policy of working with voluntary organisations for promoting welfare of the people.

The government also initiated the services provided by voluntary agencies so that the programmes undertaken by the government should be effectively supplemented. The grants-in-aid programmes were evolved for providing certain measure of stability to voluntary organisations for maintaining certain functional level of organisational and financial efficiency. It is, therefore, not at all amazing that voluntary organisations have, over the years, expanded in terms of absolute number as well as the number of services covered by them, of course, with the financial assistance provided by the government.

This made the situation somewhat complex. While in some fields certain services are being rendered by official agencies, in some other fields the same services are rendered by voluntary organisations. Even in the same field, both official and non-official agencies have been found to be working. This raised the problems of uniform financial reporting and accounting by voluntary organisations, and creation of a central intelligence service to keep track of funds received and spent by them. The other problem was regarding coordination of work done by voluntary agencies and the work done by the government and the local authorities. Related closely to the latter is the need for coordination amongst the voluntary organisation themselves.

Keeping these problems in view, Renuka Ray Study Team on Social Welfare and Welfare of Backward Classes recommended in 1959 that coordination councils should be set up at the district, state and national level. About a decade later, in the year 1967, another study team wondered as to where the voluntary organisations stood and what was their role in relation to the State (or the government)? An attempt was also made to trace the ideological or conceptual basis of government funding of voluntary organisations, failing which, it was observed that the prevailing situation does not give any clear-cut picture "Whether the State wants these (voluntary) agencies to act as an assistant or helper to the government in its plan efforts, or as a catalyst to bring about changes in society by strengthening voluntary action"²⁰

Taking a broad review of the efforts during the earlier plan periods, the Sixth Plan observed:

During the last three decades social welfare services have grown both in volume and in ranges and the outlays have also increased...The administrative machinery has also expanded and there is a better awareness of the developmental concept of social welfare....A large number of voluntary organisations are now being assisted to undertake social welfare programmes in different parts of the country. In spite of these achievements, certain deficiencies in the programmes, planning and implementation need to be remedied in order that effectiveness of social welfare schemes can be enhanced. There has been a tendency to depend on schematic patterns in the implementation of the schemes by Government or voluntary organisations leaving little room for flexibility or ability to respond to the requirements and variations in local situations.²¹

A study has been made about the unevenness of the growth of

voluntary organisations in different parts of the country. The study has come to the conclusion that : (1) insofar as the grants-in-aid programmes are concerned, the Central funds have flowed more to the areas already having strong administrative machinery and infrastructure for utilisation of funds and the remote and backward areas have been left out more or less untouched; (2) another lacuna that has been identified is the non-materialisation of the linkage of social welfare programmes with economic programmes. Many economic development projects have been launched, particularly in rural areas, without proper consideration of the social impact or the social service, and needs of women and children; and (3) monitoring of programme performance of even important schemes continues to be in terms of financial achievements rather than physical performance related to the objectives of these schemes.

Voluntary Action for Development of SC and ST in Post-Independence Period

After Independence, several such organisations have been formed in the tribal areas of different states which are working for the tribal development with the financial assistance of the government and public donations.

Among these organisations, the most important is Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh which was set up in 1948 on the initiative of Thakkar Bapa and was registered in 1949. Its objectives were:

The development of the tribal communities in India, socially, economically, culturally and educationally, with a view to enable them to take their legitimate place in national life of the country as equal citizens.²²

Dhebar report has rightly opined that it had played no small part in helping government shape its tribal welfare policy at the stage of preparation of the Constitution and thereafter the plans of development.

Dhebar report mentions that apex institution had behind it, as affiliated or recognised institutions, 62 bodies; 10 in Maharashtra; 9 in Madhya Pradesh; 6 each in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa; 5 in Assam; 4 each in Gujarat and Madras; 3 in Kerala; 2 each in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh; and one each in Mysore, West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh. Two are directly run by it—one in Assam and one in Manipur.²³

Work done by various Christian Missions has already been discussed. The Ramakrishna Missions are also doing commendable work, which we intend to discuss later on. The Central Social Welfare Board had

also done good work in the Community Development Blocks in the fifties.

Other important non-official agencies, covering tribal welfare in their programmes, are: (1) The Servants of India Society; (2) Sarv Seva Sangh, (3) Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, (4) Kasturba Smarak Nidhi, (5) The Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, (6) The Indian Council of Child Welfare, Chhindwara, and (7) Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandir, Udaipur.

The non-official agencies, including the missionary societies concentrated on education, provision of medical facilities, and, in western India, on Forest Labourers' Cooperative Societies till sixties.

Various voluntary agencies in recent years are playing a significant role in advancing the social and economic progress of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes. Some of these agencies are working on all-India basis with grants from the Central Government while a few others, whose activities are confined to one or two States, are assisted by the respective State Governments. Table 1 indicates the amount given by the Government of India to the various non-official agencies working for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes during the year 1977-78; 1978-79; 1979-80 and 1980-81.

SOME IMPORTANT VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN THE FIELD

Let us now briefly discuss the role played by some of the important voluntary organisations in this regard since independence.

✓ Harijan Sevak Sangh

Objectives of the Harijan Sevak Sangh are:

1. To remove the prevailing conception of untouchability in the social, religious, educational, public and daily dealings and to bring about amiability between the caste Hindus and Harijans;
2. To find opportunities for educational, cultural and technical development of Harijans and to obtain facilities for them;
3. To weed out deleterious beliefs and customs as well as vices from Harijan communities;
4. To remain vigilant about injustices and atrocities committed against Harijans and to initiate steps to get them full justice, and
5. To search for opportunities for the economic development of Harijans and to obtain resources for the same.

TABLE 1 GRANTS GIVEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO SOME OF THE
NON-OFFICIAL VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Sl. No.	Name of Organisation	Grants-in-aid released during the Year			
		1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
A. For Scheduled Castes					
1.	All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, Delhi	11.14	10.34	11.58	2.67
2.	Bharatiya Depressed Classes League, New Delhi	1.25	2.27	3.38	1.77
3.	Hind Sweeper Sewak Samaj, New Delhi	1.68	1.95	2.08	3.44
4.	Ishwar Saran Ashram, Allahabad	1.23	0.54	0.45	1.00
B. For Scheduled Tribes					
1.	Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, New Delhi	2.81	7.36	9.99	8.74
2.	Andhra Rashtra Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh	0.67	0.43	0.50	-
3.	Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Ranchi	1.69	1.97	1.79	2.73
4.	Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Cherrapunji	10.16	9.73	4.08	9.33
5.	Ramakrishna Mission, Shillong	0.83	1.57	0.94	3.47
6.	Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram, Kalady (Kerala)	0.86	1.11	1.36	1.13
7.	Ramakrishna Mission Sevasram, Silchar	0.93	1.00	N.A.	-
8.	Nagaland Gandhi Ashram, Mokokchung	0.30	0.49	0.41	1.33
9.	Sri Ramakrishna Society, Dimapur	0.25	0.25	0.31	2.27
10.	Ashok Ashram, Kalsi (Dehradun)	1.50	1.93	2.71	2.77
11.	Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan	-	2.00	-	-
12.	Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association, Nilgiris (Tamil Nadu)	-	0.37	1.25	1.33
13.	Sri Girivanvasi Pragati Mandal, New Delhi	-	2.50	-	-
14.	Sri Ramakrishna Seva Kendra, Calcutta	0.07	0.22	-	-
15.	Akhil Bharatiya Dayanand Sevashram Sangh, New Delhi	1.24	1.58	-	-
16.	Ramakrishna Mission, Narottam Nagar (Arunachal Pradesh)	-	-	1.88	-
17.	Ramakrishna Mission, Along (Arunachal Pradesh)	-	-	2.59	4.57

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
18.	Sri Ramakrishna Seva Kendra, Tripura	-	-	0.24	-
19.	Nikhil Bharat Banabasi Pan-chayat, Jhargram, Midnapur	-	-	2.26	-
20.	Dayanand Sewashram Sangh, North-East India, Bokajam, Karbi-Anglong, Assam	-	-	0.32	-
21.	Gharmora Model Satra Hills and Plains Cultural Institution, North Lakhimpur (Assam)	-	-	0.37	1.72
22.	Himalaya Seva Sangh, New Delhi	-	-	-	0.80
23.	Servants of India Society, Allahabad	-	-	N.A.	0.04

C. Both for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

1.	Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Puri	1.20	1.15	1.22	1.21
2.	Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Narendrapur (West Bengal)	2.30	2.91	3.16	3.36
3.	Thakkar Bapa Ashram, Nima-khadi (Orissa)	0.32	0.44	1.16	0.51
4.	Servants of India Society, Poona,	3.66	4.49	5.06	5.27
5.	Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Purulia	-	0.19	0.25	0.44
6.	Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Nima-pith (Orissa)	-	1.87	-	-
7.	Gharmora Model Satra Hills and Plains Cultural Institution, North Lakhimpur (Assam)	-	0.27	-	-
8.	Dayanand Vidya Niketan, Bokajam (Kartri-Anglong), Assam	-	-	2.40	-

D. For Other Backward Classes

1.	Indian Red Cross Society, New Delhi	6.49	8.33	8.76	10.42
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* Also the other Backward Classes.

SOURCE : The 26th and the 27th Reports of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Delhi, Controller of Publications, 1978-79 and 1979-81, pp.197 and, 230-231 respectively.

During 1978-79, the Harijan Sevak Sangh took up the schemes of 'Intensive Area Work' for removal of untouchability in 31 blocks selected in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. Fifty villages in each Block were taken up. The 'Intensive Area Scheme' has been chalked out for conducting programme of removal of untouchability within a specified area a definite time-frame. Plans for this purpose are drawn up on the basis of prior surveys conducted from time to time.

Workers of the Sangh have surveyed more than 1,500 villages and gathered information regarding rampant social disabilities of various types, population of Harijan and landless families and the number of their school-going children, etc. For removal of untouchability, Sangh launched intensive programme, including propaganda through its Pracharaks, publication of literature, film shows, arranging of **padyatras** by its workers, holding of meetings, and goodwill conferences, etc., which are generally addressed by religious leaders, teachers and intellectuals. At such gatherings, various aspects of the problems of Scheduled Castes were discussed and brought to the notice of the Government for redress. According to the 27th Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, during 1979-80, the sevaks conducted 4,265 goodwill conferences, meetings and social gatherings and organised 17 mela meetings. The Sangh resumed publication of Hindi-cum-English bi-monthly magazine **Harijan Seva** containing information about achievements made by the Sangh regarding removal of untouchability and welfare of Harijans. Small booklets **Sevaks Guide** and **Anmole Vachan** in Hindi were also published for the guidance of the field workers of the Sangh. The workers of the Sangh succeeded in getting free access of Harijans to 222 temples, 371 wells, 347 restaurants and services of 169 barbers and 40 washerman in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh in the year 1979-80.

Under the Bhangi Kasht Mukti Scheme, which aims at abolition of scavenging, the workers got 3,737 dry latrines converted into water-borne and 4,209 water borne (sweeper-free) latrines were constructed.

The Safai Vidyalaya at Ahmedabad run by the Sangh, which provides training to a large number of workers in urban and rural sanitation and systematic and hygienic disposal of nightsoil, organised a number of training camps in the districts of Ahmedabad, Broach, Amreti, Mehsana and Valsad in which about 325 workers participated. The Vidyalaya, with the help of Government of Gujarat, arranged 100 exhibitions highlighting rural sanitation, primary care, handflush

urinals, etc. The intensive area workers, regional sevakas and mahila pracharaks who concentrate mainly on the rural and semi-urban areas, because of the prevalence of untouchability and unhygienic conditions, visited 7,766 villages in 15 States in during 1979-80.

In Delhi, the Sangh is running since 1944 a residential institution for girls, namely, Kasturba Balika Ashram for imparting education to Harijan girls to improve their social status. The Ashram provides education up to 10th class and is affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education. During 1979-80, it had 573 girl students on its rolls out of which 190 were resident students. The total number of Scheduled Castes students was 220 and out of 190 resident students, 173 belonged to Scheduled Castes.

Another residential institution, known as 'Bapa Ashram School', exclusively run for children of sweepers and scavengers, though some other deserving students belonging to other Scheduled Caste communities are also admitted. The resident students are given free boarding, lodging, clothing and some other facilities. Besides educational development, the students are provided training in other activities, such as chalk making, ink making, clay modelling, crafts, etc.

✓ **Bhartiya Depressed Classes League**

The League also works for removal of untouchability. Their main schemes are: (i) appointment of pracharaks for propoganda for removal of the practice of untouchability, (ii) publicity through publishing of posters, pamphlets, etc., (iii) holding of conferences, melas, meetings, seminars, etc., and (iv) attending to complaints from the aggrieved Scheduled Castes and to supervise the work of the Pracharaks. Seventy Pracharaks, including Lady Pracharaks, conducted meetings and arranged melas in various localities to impress upon caste Hindus the desirability of eradicating the unsocial practice of untouchability. During 1979-80, 4,591 public meetings and social gatherings were arranged and 51 temples for Harijans, 89 water-taps/wells, 73 hotels, were got opened and 122 community dinners and 20 cultural programmes were organised for this purpose. In addition, 99 villages were cleaned, 5 night schools were maintained, and 28 Bhajan Mandalis were arranged in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and the Union Territories of Pondicherry, Chandigarh, and Delhi. These Pracharaks also assisted Harijan students in getting admission to various educational institutions and helped the aggrieved in registering their complaints of harassment with the police.

Hind Sweeper's Sevak Samaj

During 1979-80, the Hind Sweeper's Sevak Samaj continued to run nine social Welfare and Education Centres at Allahabad, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, Varanasi, Fatehpur, Katni and Ranaghat in Uttar Pradesh; Gurgaon in Haryana; and Patiala in Punjab, to cater to the needs of the children and women belonging to the Scheduled Castes. The Samaj also maintained one hostel for Scheduled Caste post-matric students at Allahabad where special coaching was provided to the 35 inmates, in addition to free board and lodging facilities. The Samaj also maintained an Ashram school for sweepers at Allahabad. Poor Scheduled Castes children of school-going age of the surrounding rural areas, particularly the ones belonging to sweeper community, were accommodated and provided free board and lodging. In addition, the Samaj also maintained one short-hand and type-writing centre at Lucknow.

Bhartiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh

The Bhartiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh, founded by late Sri Thakkar Bappa, undertakes works for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes through its central office in New Delhi as well as through its affiliated branches in various states. During 1979-80, Government of India reviewed the scheme of 'Life Membership' and agreed to give grant-in-aid of Rs. 6.42 lakh for scheme. Under this scheme, a cadre of 56 Life Members (20 senior, 12 junior and 24 volunteers) was evolved in the organisation, in addition to 13 Life members already borne on the Sangh's Cadre. The Life Members were reported to have been posted in the remote tribal areas located in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Arunachal Pradesh. During 1980-81, these Life Members have made very significant contribution towards the welfare of tribals by living in their environments, surveying their areas of abode and activities, to have first-hand knowledge about the problems of the tribals and to find out remedial solutions to these problems. These Life Members work in close collaboration with the district authorities and are well aware about the day-to-day instructions of the Government. They keep themselves up-to-date in the sphere of their activities.

In addition, during 1980-81, the Sangh continued their schemes of Training Centre at Rupa (Arunachal Pradesh). Concentrated efforts were made to cultivate the sentiments of national and emotional integration amongst the local tribals through various welfare programmes. At Jhalod (Gujarat) the Sangh is running Gujarat Tribal Women's Training Centre to train women workers to undertake and

implement child welfare programmes and to do extensive work amongst rural and tribal women. At Srikakulam (Andhra Pradesh), the Sangh is maintaining a Tribal Kanya Ashram School, where tribal girls from Srikakulam district and its interior areas come for studies up to college stage.

Nagaland Gandhi Ashram, Chuchugimlong (Nagaland)

Nagaland Gandhi Ashram, Chuchugimlong was established in 1955. The first activity taken up by the Ashram was a small medical aid centre. In 1977, a multipurpose medical relief camp was organised. Encouraged with the success, the Gandhi Ashram, in October, 1979 started a Health Centre. Later on, a health service scheme on the lines of health insurance was designed. Under the provisions of the scheme, patients desirous to have treatment at the centre, have to pay a nominal fee of Rs. 6 per patient per year. After the payment, a patient is entitled to OPD facilities at the centre throughout the year. Till March, 1980 a total number of 224 members were registered under the scheme. Almost all the members belonged to the Scheduled Tribes of the State. A total number of 2,700 patients were provided medicines till the end of March, 1980. Sri Natwar Thakkar, the Secretary of the Ashram and his team of dedicated workers have done excellent work for the upliftment of rural inhabitants of Nagaland and Chuchugimlong in particular. Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has rightly opined that judging from the success which the Ashram had achieved, it was desirable that the influence of good work started by Sri Natwar Thakkar and his Ashram should be extended and more and more such Gandhi Ashrams should be started in Nagaland and its surrounding regions.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Puri

Taking the cue from Sri Ramakrishna's message "To serve Jiva is to serve Shiva", Swami Vivekananda, after his return from the West, formed on May 1, 1897 an association--'Ramakrishna Mission' which was got registered on May 4, 1909 under the Societies' Registration Act XXI of 1860. It has 139 branch centres all over the world with the headquarters at Belur (near Calcutta), which are engaged in worship of God in man through various activities--relief and rehabilitation, medical services, educational work, work in rural and tribal areas, etc.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Puri is conducting a Students' Home for the students belonging to Scheduled Castes/Tribes. During 1979-80 the total strength of the Students' Home stood at 65 out of whom 13 belonged to Scheduled Castes, 46 to Scheduled Tribes and the remaining 6 to the economically backward and other backward classes.

The Ashram under the "Type-Writing Training Scheme", imparted training to a group of 15 trainees under the guidance of a part-time instructor. Special coaching was also given to the students regularly with the help of the teachers appointed for the purpose. In addition, two other projects of Diary and Bakery were also taken up. The dairy farm maintained by the Ashram provided practical demonstration in cattle rearing to the students and also provided milk to inmates. The Bakery imparted training to students in making biscuits, etc.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Ranchi

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Ranchi is running Divyayan (meaning the Divine Way) which was started in 1969 with three-fold objectives: economic, social and spiritual. Divyayan concept is one of total approach for the rehabilitation of man and the endeavour is to work at the grassroots level. With a humble beginning, it has now grown into a fullfledged training institute with a poultry (about 6,000 birds), a diary (about 45 cattle heads), a 3-storyed hostel, a workshop with modern equipment and machinery with a separate carpentry section, a mobile audio-visual unit with film projectors, slide projectors, films, slides, VCR, TV, etc., and demonstration farms of nine acres at the centre plus 144 acres in the villages of Getalsud and Mahespur (P.S. Angara, District Ranchi) about 35 km. away from the Centre, being developed for demonstration, seed multiplication, research, social forestry, etc.

In all, 3,776 farmers have been trained under on-campus programme (till 1987) and 11,877 under off-campus programmes, most of whom belong to backward communities of Chhotanagpur. Impressed with the success achieved by Divyayan in imparting skill-oriented training to the grassroots level farmers, Indian Council of Agricultural Research has recognised it as a Krishi Vigyan Kendra since 1977.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Cherrapunji

The Government of India assisted the Ashram for maintenance of technical, middle, primary and J.B. Schools for uplift of the tribals living in remote areas of Meghalaya. Under the scheme, the Ashram maintained 46 schools. During 1980-81, there were more than 3,000 students on the rolls of these schools. Under the Dairy and Poultry Farming scheme started during the year 1980-81 for the first time, the Ashram is imparting training in modern dairy and poultry farming to the tribal youth. It also enables the inmates of Cherra and Shohbar students' Hostels to get fresh milk and eggs which are very difficult to procure from the local market.²⁴

ROLE OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Voluntary agencies can play a useful role in planning, implementation and evaluation of various development plans which has been endorsed by various commissions. To begin with, Dhebar Commission opined as early as in 1961:

The *raison d'être* for successful functioning of a participating democracy is direct, active and purposeful participation of the people at all levels, in planning and implementation of welfare activities. This principle can be best served by assigning an important role to non-official organisations. It is necessary in any democratic framework that a measure of the constructive activity of the nation should be done under non-official auspices.²⁵

Sivaraman Committee, in its report on the role of voluntary agencies, opines that voluntary agencies which are engaged in social and developmental work, especially in rural areas, can be profitably involved in planning and/or implementation of the integrated rural development programme. The committee has recommended that, to begin with, voluntary agencies may be involved in planning and implementation of about 100 block plans. It has further recommended that a high-powered committee should be set up at the centre which would select voluntary agencies and the areas where they will work in cases where comprehensive block planning and/or implementation is to be undertaken by the voluntary agencies. Coordination committees are also to be set up at the state level for selecting voluntary agencies and the area of operation in case where part of the block plan is involved. It is understood that recommendations of the committee are under the consideration of the Government.²⁶

It is, thus, clear that voluntary agencies could be used to plan the programme on the basis of real local needs and resources at the village and block level and be entrusted with execution of programmes, which is urgently required for Harijan and Tribal development. Thus, for instance, the Dantwala working group on block level planning calls attention to the fact that at the village level, the unemployed or underemployed prefer to remain so, if employment is offered to them in locations far away from their houses (this is more true about the Scheduled tribes). This is the kind of situation which a voluntary agency takes into account in both planning employment programmes and executing them in the village(s) concerned. Similar gaps exist in Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment

(TRYSEM) programme and the recently started RLEGP, which through voluntary agencies, can be set right, to an extent.²⁷

A study of the history of Harijan and Tribal development indicates that these two communities are mere passive spectators of the drama of development. However, development cannot be achieved unless beneficiaries themselves become conscious of their own rights, of the conditions and the circumstances which made them socially and economically disadvantaged and have an urge to alter the situation with proper understanding of the correlations of social-economic forces. The voluntary agencies can make them active participants in the change process.²⁸

Group action and exogenous support is essential in IRDP for making correct selection of beneficiaries, choice of investment, getting the loans sanctioned in time and in making a reasonable income by overcoming the unfavourable market forces. A dedicated voluntary organisation could educate, conscientise and prepare the ground for collective action of the beneficiaries by making suitable intervention at all these points.²⁹

Voluntary agencies at national, state or levels down, could be asked to do evaluation of programmes. According to studies made by some research institutions and even some official agencies, only 10 per cent of the Rs. 500 crore funds allocated to the programme in the three years 1980-81 to 1982-83, actually reached the poor families for whom it was intended.³⁰

Under these conditions, voluntary agencies can help in monitoring IRDP programmes executed by government functionaries to ensure that the benefits reach the beneficiary for whom they are intended to the maximum extent possible.

Thus, there cannot be two opinions on active role of voluntary agencies. It has many advantages; the plans are conceived and formulated on the basis of the felt-needs of the people, there is sizable saving in expenditure; implementation becomes easier; and finally people's aspirations are largely met. Dhebar has rightly said that they can also become the training-ground of social service workers on a mass scale.

NEW FIELDS FOR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

No doubt voluntary agencies are doing appreciable work for Harijan and Tribal Development, yet there are still certain areas of Tribal Development where even greater involvement of these is needed. They

are as follows:

1. Ignorance about tribal customs and traditions about land holdings in certain areas has resulted in wrong recording in surveys by settlement authorities resulting in transfer of title of their Land. It is giving rise to tribal discontent. Voluntary organisation should take this matter in their hand.
2. An estimation places the total number of bonded labour, both tribal and non-tribal, in the country at about 32 lakh. Attempts were made to identify tribal bonded labourers during the first four years of the Sixth Five-Year Plan. In the large tribal states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, identification was noticeably poor. It would be of interest, therefore, to see the contribution of voluntary organisations in identification of bonded-labour. The Programme Evaluation Organisations study included this aspect.
3. The 'bottle' has acted as an important conduit through which the wily forces of exploitation have long been entering tribal areas. 'Sanskar Kendras' to wean the tribals from drinking on the pattern organised in the State of Gujarat should be introduced in the tribal areas in good number through voluntary agencies, who may be assisted cent per cent by special Central assistance.
4. There are 72 primitive tribal groups in the country with an estimated population of 14 lakh. There is a need to carry out ecological study of each one of these primitive tribes highlighting their pattern of distribution in space, adaptive process in their social organisation, economic activities, their world-view vis-a-vis physical and social environment, social organisation of labour, time budgeting, etc. Each of these aspects requires to be studied in detail for preparing a blue-print for their future. There has been an emphasis, since the Fifth Plan period, on preparation of a project report for each of these groups relative to its situation. Nevertheless, there has been considerable neglect in this regard. Apart from continued misery of conditions in which they live, risk of extinction of some of these tribes is not unreal. The extremely onerous and delicate dimensions of the problem of primitive tribal groups inclines us to the belief that public and voluntary agencies should share the responsibility of the care and nursing of primitive tribal groups along with governmental agencies. The voluntary organisations should come forward to accept the challenge in this regard.
5. It has been estimated by the Task Force on Shifting

Cultivation, set up by the Ministry of Agriculture, that approximately 9.95 million hectares in the tribal and hilly areas of the country are under shifting cultivation. The problem cannot be lightly brushed aside as over six lakh tribal families depend on this source for their living. This problem could be tackled easily if the voluntary agencies adopt a programme of educating the shifting cultivators on advantages of settled cultivation, which should be taken up alongwith implementation of the settlement/resettlement schemes.

6. There is a concentration of industrial and mining activity in the tribal belt of the country. The abrupt juxtaposition has produced traumatic results for the tribals. Instead of having benefited from the new ferment, the tribals have suffered loss of land and forest. Some of the cottage, village and small industries commonly in operation in the tribal areas, which need encouragement, include: (a) forest-based small industries, and (b) mineral-based cottage and village industries, weaving, sericulture and others. Arrangements for marketing could be done through various voluntary agencies.
7. Various studies have revealed that developmental efforts have not reached tribal women. The tribal women should be encouraged to set up 'Mahila Mandals' and 'Mahila Samitis' and such organisations should be taken into confidence during planning and implementation of their welfare/development programmes. On an experimental basis, reputed voluntary women's organisations will have to be identified and entrusted with selected programmes.

AN EVALUATION OF THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

When we try to evaluate the role of voluntary agencies, we are faced with a lot of controversies about their performance. There are two diametrically opposed views about them. For example, Mohit Sen views, "It is wrong and even harmful to rely on voluntary agencies even partially for the implementation of plan projects, especially directed at poor millions".³¹ Kamal Narayan Kabra opines, "like so many false alternatives being propagated to so many genuine issues, the officially recognised, financed and co-opted voluntary agencies will prove another anarchonism and false alternative".³² On the other hand, we have a long list of politicians, academics and social workers who have lauded their role for development of the weaker sections. For example, the Prime Minister's directive to Chief Ministers in October 1982 to involve voluntary organisations in

development by forming Consultative Groups³³, and the current move by the government to set up a National Council of Rural Voluntary Agencies are all signs of change for better in the official attitude towards voluntary organisations. Planning Commission members, C.H. Hanumantha Rao³⁴, and Raj Krishna³⁵ and social workers, like Mahasveta Devi³⁶ and many others have made a fulsome praise in favour of voluntary agencies. No doubt, there are good and bad voluntary agencies.

For example, we may visit Narendrapur in Calcutta and Coimbatore, amongst others, doing silent work of training, with echo around, under Ramakrishna Mission. Nilokheri, situated on the National Highway, 150 kilometers north of Delhi, with its rural-cum-urban township and the quest therein soon after 1947 for a "road to new India" is another example of voluntary action by many a volunteer totally committed to the cause and supported strongly by Nehru despite opposition from within government and without.³⁷ What SEWA has done in Ahmedabad is something that a government agency has not have been able to do. What the Tagore Society for Rural Development is doing in 27 villages in five islands of the Sunderban area in West Bengal is an unlikely proposition for a bureaucratic and hierarchical state agency.³⁸ The examples, but a few, cited in the foregoing, are illustrative of what can follow when the 'cause is honest', and there is integrity, inspiration and fire from within.

We have another example too. S.K. Dey has mentioned about some of the activities of Sarva Seva Sangh. He writes:

It was decided to have a pilot project under the Sangh in the backward district of Koraput in Orissa, where eight tribal blocks had already been covered by 'Gram Dan' to 'Block Dan'. One of the Blocks was taken under the unfettered charge of the Sangh with full resources, but staff appointed exclusively by them. A year passed. The entire resources had been spent out. All that happened was that the Block Development Officer selected and appointed exclusively by them out of their own youth group, had established an Ashram for himself immeasurably better fitted and equipped than Gandhiji's own at Sevagram....A vital young Adibashi girl of rare beauty found her place to look after the Ashram and its occupant....There came also a big store house for jungle produce with hardly 5 per cent of space occupied. When the doings were reported to the Sangh, the young man was removed. The joint programme also came virtually to an end.³⁹

The works of the foreign Christian Missions are also not an un-mixed evil. One may see a village, which at one time worked and

lived as a single unit, now split into a Christian hamlet and a Non-Christian hamlet. Dhebar report mentions about a village where no fewer than five Missions were carrying on propaganda, opening separate schools and teaching different forms of Christianity.⁴⁰

These days, government is facing some difficulties from foreign voluntary agencies, particularly in scheduled areas. It would be desirable to subject the foreign assistance received by such organisations to strict check before permitting its utilisation in tribal area programmes.⁴¹ Chief Editor of Yojana has also opined, "Mysterious, they say, are the ways of the unseen hand that backs them".⁴² We should be careful not to encourage development rackets in the name of people's participation and involvement of voluntary agencies.

CONCLUSION

After assessing the role of voluntary agencies for Tribal and Harijan development, we come to the conclusion that they have come to stay. The United Nations Children's Fund report opines, "All over the world, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), both national and international, are active partners of communities and governments in their efforts to protect the health and normal growth of their children....World-wide, it has been estimated that more than 3,000 international NGOs are at work, and they mobilise more than 2.3 billion every year for assistance to the developing world".⁴³ A devoted governmental agency can certainly do the work of development to some extent, but if it had the support of the voluntary organisations, it could do the job much better. We have seen from experience during the last three decades that 'Rashtra Shakti' or government action by itself could not achieve much unless it was supported by 'Lok Shakti' or 'Jan Shakti'.

The State's agency bureaucracy would require sensitisation, which could come through very largely, if it were made to work along with voluntary organisations. Beyond doubt, the experience all over the world is that non-officials could communicate to people with greater understanding and conviction than officials.

There are people who charge that there has been misuse of funds by voluntary agencies. There is some truth in it. But the amount misused is likely to be much smaller in the aggregate than the vast amounts wasted by government agencies.

With the adoption of new strategies for the economic and educational development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes during the Sixth Plan, it has now become more important to involve voluntary organisations fully in this gigantic task. Voluntary organisations

are now gradually coming forward to take up various developmental programmes for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The decision has to be taken about the type of programmes to be entrusted to such organisations during the Seventh Plan so that there may be a clear-cut demarcation of areas of operation between the programmes undertaken by the State Governments and those entrusted to the voluntary organisations to avoid duplication.

It cannot be denied that the entire backward rural areas of the country cannot be covered by the voluntary organisations. But at the same time, it has also to be accepted that the government organisations could not reach these areas completely. There is, thus, no other alternative to this government-voluntary agency partnership for the crusade against poverty.

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24. The author has relied heavily on the 26th and the 27th Reports of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in this portion.
25. U.N. Dhebar, *op.cit.*, p. 307.
26. Quoted by Shishir Kumar in 26th Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
27. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, "No Good for This High Task", *Yojana*, Vol. 28, Nos. 20-21, November 1984, p. 17.
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41. S. Narayanaswamy, *op.cit.*, p. 188.
42. Chief Editor (*Yojana*), "Wanted Good Guys", *Yojana*, Vol. 28, Nos. 20 and 21, p. 4.
43. James P. Grant, *The State of the World's Children 1987 (UNICEF)*, Oxford University Press, UK, p. 58.

Public Policy on Adult Education and Voluntary Agencies in Andhra Pradesh *

I. RAMABRAHMAM

PUBLIC POLICY under any democratic political system is implemented by a complex of administrative institutions, functions of which affect the life of citizens. Policy analysts would not concern themselves with public administration but for the fact that in the countries which have become independent, the bureaucracy has come to play a decisive role in the formulation and implementation of public policies.¹ Although the primary implementors of public policy are the administrative agencies, there are several others, including voluntary organisations, involved in their implementation. While the action of the public or the State agencies is in response to a constitutional or statutory mandate, that of voluntary agencies stems from the non-formal, the market and the community, reflecting the people's will as is ought to be in a participatory democracy.² Voluntarism is to be welcomed, especially in a democracy, because voluntary organisations are usually formed to fulfil the emerging needs of the community at large. Their relations with the statutory authorities are subject to change because of changes in administration and or enactment of new laws. Moreover, such relations are not governed by a conflict model but by a complementary model.³ In fact, State and society sometimes have to organise agencies to meet a set of special needs which calls for a flexible approach and the so-called Parallel Bar theory is to be applied to regulate the relationship between the voluntary and government agencies.⁴

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VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN SPECIALISED SECTORS

In developing countries, the government itself may promote voluntary organisations to work in specialised areas or sectors as per the so-called 'Relay Theory', because the voluntary organisations have an inbuilt capacity for new approaches and motivations suited to the socio-economic situation in which they have to operate, whereas government agencies are marked by certain rigid organisational procedures and personnel attitudes conditioned by out-dated manuals and outmoded motivations.⁵ A draft bill for constitution of a Council of Rural Voluntary Agencies (CRVA), which was circulated last year, brought to the fore the indeterminacy and ambivalence of government's attitude towards voluntary agencies, since it implied a recognition, on the one hand, of the valuable work done by them and, on the other, of the need for treating them more generously than before, despite the reservations that it had had as regards the role to be assigned to them in what had come to be regarded as its exclusive responsibility. This explains the inclusion of a Code of Conduct for Voluntary Organisations calling for commitment to elimination of poverty, practice of austerity and professionalisation, besides accountability⁶ which would brook no argument. However, the draft Bill was not clear on the question of voluntary agencies being required to be registered under the Act before their being allowed to participate in governmental programmes and receive contributions from foreign sources. While welcoming the bill referred to above, serious attention needs to be paid to the causes for the assumption of such an attitude on the part of the government which have to be investigated. It is undeniable that the voluntary agencies are susceptible to such a manipulation by the unscrupulous elements in them as would turn them into instruments of self-aggrandisement and acquisition of power. Further, the emergence of voluntary organisations with a popular base and headed by esteemed members of the public tend to be viewed by the bureaucracy as a possible threat to its untrammelled exercise of authority and discretion.⁷ In tune with the said bill was the proposal for establishment of Social and Economic Voluntary Association for Reconstruction and Development (SIVARD) which would be seriously considered as an agency for correcting deviations and lapses in respect of "the strategy and tactics of socio-economic development and change".⁸ However, the proposal for establishment of the SIVARD can possibly run into rough weather because of the general disposition of voluntary agencies to zealously guard and preserve their individual identities, which is presumably needed to compete for larger shares of governmental grants that would be made available to them. Further, formation of a SIVARD, which is capable of turning

into a cartel or a gigantic combine, would undermine their very character and generate such tendencies as those related to market management.

However, it may still be asserted that in newly independent countries, like India, the rising expectations or aspirations of the people stimulated by "the philosophy of the rights", stemming from the State's acceptance of democratic socialism, can be matched only by the efforts of diverse organisations--governmental and voluntary--acting in unison as is evidenced by the work of such agencies as the Indian Conference of Social Work and the Council for Social Development.⁹

In India, the term 'Voluntary Agency' refers only to non-official societies registered under the Societies' Registration Act or Charitable and Endowment Trusts Act covering, as it does, only a limited area of voluntary action which, in fact, means any action promoted by people's own volition and organised by members of public. Indeed, due importance is to be given to voluntary agencies as they signify "the operational identity of people", while the government or the State represents the political identity of the people whose mandate they have to carry out. However, voluntary organisations should not merely fill in the slots or the gaps in officially initiated schemes or programmes of action as is the case with several of them.¹⁰ This is borne out by the studies carried out by the experts of the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) testifying to the tendency among some voluntary organisations to seek government grants rather than raise resources on their own directly from the community. Such a tendency is bound to adversely affect the very character of voluntary agencies identified with self-effacement and the spirit of sacrifice and service, which is not to deny the significant contributions made by a good number of them to vital sectors of community and national development.¹¹ The success of the efforts of voluntary agencies has been due to their being free of redtapism and an inbuilt flexibility to respond to differential needs of the people and the personal touch characterising their work with people, which would be possible only if they avoid becoming mini-bureaucracies in their attempts to fulfil the conditions of grants-in-aid or refuse to be conditioned by the bureaucratic ethos.

As analysed by Milton Esman¹², there are four instruments of public policy to quicken the pace of nation building and socio-economic development, especially in Third World countries, as follows: (i) Political Organisation, (ii) Administrative System, (iii) Associational/Interest Groups, and (iv) Mass Media. In his opinion, community organisations or voluntary agencies greatly

facilitate deliberate social change, if only for the reason that in the performance of many service and control functions, governments cannot effectively deal with unorganised individuals.¹³ Further, as pointed out by Esman, the involvement of voluntary agencies in implementation of public policies would help: (i) in building up a sense of solidarity, (ii) in throwing up opportunities to interact with the agencies of development, and (iii) in participating in decision-making.¹⁴ Furthermore, unburdened with the colonial bureaucratic legacy of characteristic indifference to people's feelings and opinions, the voluntary agencies, rooted in the people, will be able to humanise the system needed for active participation and involvement of people at large in any developmental effort,¹⁵ especially those related to realisation of policy goals in qualitative sectors like adult and primary education.

Policy on Adult Education

Adult education was a non-issue before Independence. It was only after emergence of such voluntary organisations as Servants of India Society (1905), Seva Sadan (1908), Mahila Samaj (1910), and Socialist League (1911) that the significance of adult education came to be recognised.¹⁶ Advent of Gandhiji on the political scene helped to strengthen the efforts made in initiating an adult education movement which was sought to be linked to his conception of Basic Education as an antidote to the unhelpful book-centred education.¹⁷ After the Congress governments assumed power in different provinces in 1937, campaigns for adult education, on a fairly large scale, were launched, but with the resignation of these governments in 1939, the mass campaigns also lost their dynamism. Following Independence and inclusion of the realisation of universal elementary education as one of the Directive Principles in the Constitution, attempts were made to widen the scale of operation in respect of adult education programmes which did not fructify till it came to be included in Social Education under Community Development Scheme. This resulted in making about 5,00,000 adults literate per year entailing an expenditure of less than one per cent of the total expenditure on education.¹⁸ Interestingly, the Kothari Commission was the first to consider adult education and eradication of mass illiteracy as a very important programme of government which led to its inclusion in the National Policy on Education of 1968. On account of its being turned into a functional literacy programme, as in the case of farmers, and linked to the Green Revolution, it did succeed to an extent. But, not much headway was made.

For the first time since Independence, a national policy to educate about 100 million adult illiterates in the age group of 15-35

was formulated in the year 1978. The policy planners of the programme dwelt at length on the organisational aspects of the national adult education programme. The role of the non-governmental agencies and semi-governmental agencies is particularly recognised. In fact, the policy document makes it very clear that "adult education must cease to be the concern of only educational authority."¹⁹ It should be an indispensable input in all sectors of development, particularly where participation of the beneficiaries is crucial to the fulfilment of development objectives. Further, it was stated: "a prerequisite of an adult education movement is that all agencies, governmental, voluntary, public and private sector, industry, institutes of formal education should lend strength to it". A unique feature of the policy is the special place given to voluntary agencies. The policy statement emphatically stated that "voluntary agencies have a special role to play and necessary steps shall have to be taken to secure their full involvement."²⁰ National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was launched on October 2, 1978, i.e., on Gandhiji's birth anniversary.

The policy statement declared that the government had "resolved to wage a clearly conceived well planned and relentless struggle against illiteracy to enable the masses to play an active role in social and cultural change," which was based on the following assumptions:

- (a) that illiteracy is a serious impediment to an individual's growth and to country's socio-economic progress;
- (b) that education is not coterminous with schooling but takes place in most work and life situation;
- (c) that learning, working and living are inseparable, each of which acquires a meaning only when correlated with the other;
- (d) that the means by which people are involved in the process of development are at least as important as the ends; and
- (e) that the illiterate and the poor can rise to their own liberation through literacy dialogue and action.²¹

With the change of government at the Centre, a National Policy²² covering various aspects and levels of education, including adult education, was formulated spelling out a programme of implementation and setting up of a management system of NPAP with the specific objectives of: (i) strengthening the technical and pedagogic resource support; (ii) decentralising the planning and implementation process and functional autonomy; (iii) establishing an effective linkage between development agencies and NPAP; (iv) securing commitment or political parties, mass organisations, educational institutions, voluntary agencies, etc.; (v) delineating responsibility to enforce

operational accountability; and (vi) ensuring effective participation of the functionaries of NPAE, the intended beneficiaries and the community in planning and day-to-day programmes at the grass-roots level, besides adoption of a project approach. As envisaged by the NPAE, the Adult Education Centre (AEC) organised at the village or mohalla level will be the operational unit, 8 to 10 of which will be supervised by a supervisor selected from the local area.²³

At the district level, the District Boards of Education (DBE's) will discharge the responsibility of planning for eradication of illiteracy to which the technical assistance will be provided by the District Resource Units (DRU's) to be set up under the NPAE. At the State and National levels, a commission headed by the Chief Minister and the Minister of HRD, respectively, with political leaders of the principal national parties as members are to be set up with financial and administrative powers to be exercised by the State Executive Committee headed by the Chief Secretary or the Education Secretary and the National Executive Committee by the Union Education Secretary. It may, thus, be seen that the programme of action stipulated can be expected to yield significant results.

ADULT EDUCATION IN ANDHRA THROUGH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

The efforts made in Andhra Pradesh for promotion of adult education and eradication of illiteracy offer a revealing perspective on those made elsewhere in the country in this regard, since the percentage of illiteracy in Andhra Pradesh, according to 1981 census, is not only lower than the national average but is among the lowest in the country ranking 23rd as it does among the states and Union Territories put together.

Andhra Pradesh had been implementing the NAEP--now called National Programme of Adult Education (NPAE)--since 1979-80, under which all the 23 districts are covered. The projects, each of which consists of 300 Adult Education Centres, are called Rural Functional Literacy Programmes (RFLP), if fully financed by the Central Government, and State Adult Education Programmes, if run with State financial assistance, respectively. Of the 20 voluntary agencies, which applied for financial assistance to the Ministry of Education, Government of India (which directly administers grants to voluntary agencies), between 1980-83--nine were selected for implementation of the NAEP (see Table 1) from Andhra Pradesh of which four formed the sample for the present study which was conducted between 1983-84.

Table 1 VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SELECTED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, THE AREAS OF OPERATION AND THE NUMBER OF CENTRES

Sl. No.	Agency	Areas of Operation	District	No. of Centres
1.	Andhra Mahila Sabha, Hyderabad	Huzurnagar Sirсила Jangoan	Warangal Karimnagar Warangal	100 100 100
2.	Andhra Pradesh Adimajati Sevak Sangh, Vijayawada	Tenali	Guntur	60
3.	Bhagavathula Charitable Trust, Ellamanchili	Ellamanchili	Vizag	30
4.	Bharateeya Adimajati Sevak Sangh	Narsampet	Warangal	100
5.	Comprehensive Rural Operation Service Society, Bhongir	Bhongir	Nalgonda	30
6.	Durga Sangh Seva Samaj, Vijayawada	Gannavaram	Krishna	30
7.	Hindu Kusht Nivaran Sangh, Hyderabad	Jammikunta	Karimnagar	60
8.	Village Reconstruction Organisation, Guntur	Guntur Prakasam Krishna	Guntur Ongole Krishna	100
9.	Weaker Community Action for Development and Liberation, Hyderabad	Shadnagar	Mahboobnagar	30

SOURCE: Records of the Directorate of Adult Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh (1979-83), Hyderabad.

The area of operation of voluntary agencies is spread over nine districts of Andhra Pradesh, which include Guntur, Krishna, Prakasam, Visakhapatnam of the coastal region, besides Warangal, Nalgonda, Karimnagar and Mahboobnagar of Telangana region, but not a single district belonging to the remaining region known as the Rayalaseema. Two agencies from coastal region and two from Telangana were selected for the present study.

Focus on Four Agencies

Although only four of the nine agencies were selected, they could

be regarded as being representative of all the voluntary agencies engaged in the NAEP in Andhra Pradesh because of their location and the number of Adult Education Centres constituting them (see Table 2).

Table 2 VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SELECTED

Sl.No.	Agency	Area of Operation	Literacy Level	Rank order in the State	No. of centres
1.	Andhra Mahila Sabha (AMS)	Sirsilla Tq. (Karimnagar)	21.50	21	100
2.	Bhagavathula Charitable Trust (BCT)	Ellaman-chili Tq. (Vizag Dt.)	27.83	13	30
3.	Comprehensive Rural Operations Service Society (CROSS)	Bhongir Tq. (Nalgonda Dt.)	22.44	17	30
4.	Durga Sangh Seva Samaj (DSS)	Ganna-varam Tq. (Krishna Dt.)	41.71	2	30
Tq. = Taluq.					
Dt. = District.					
Total Number of Centres					190

Table 2 brings out classification of the agencies on the basis of literacy levels in the areas graded as advanced, (40 per cent above), less advanced (25 to 30 per cent), and backward (20-25 per cent), in which they are located. Further, inclusion of agencies in the sample was based on whether they were run by women or both men and women which would be in accordance with the demographic distribution of the target population concerned. The sample, thus, had two women's agencies, viz., Andhra Mahila Sabha, the premier Women's voluntary agency in this part of the country; and Durga Sangh Seva Samaj, Vijayawada, the oldest Women's Organisation; and two general agencies, viz., Bhagavathula Charitable Trust (BCT), Ellamanchili, and Comprehensive Rural Operations Service Society (CROSS), Bhongir. Of the 190 Adult Education Centres (AEC's), run by the said four agencies, 10 per cent, i.e. 19 of them were selected through stratified

purposive random sampling covering learners, drop-outs, potential learners and instructors.

The prescribed strength for each AEC being 30, the total number of learners enrolled was 570 of which 30 per cent (about 171) were included in the sample concerning learner respondents. The drop-outs figuring in the sample numbered 57, i.e., 3 per an AEC and the potential learners considered were 38, i.e., 2 per an AEC. As for the instructors, all of them attached to the 19 AEC were included in the sample. The following Table 3 sets forth the particulars of the sample in this regard.

Table 3 CATEGORIES OF RESENDENTS

Sl.No.	Classification	AMS	BCT	CROSS	DSS	Total
1.	Learners	90	27	27	27	171
2.	Drop-outs	30	9	9	9	57
3.	Potential learners	20	6	6	6	38
4.	Instructors	10	3	3	3	19
Total No. of Respondents:						285

The scale of operation of each of these agencies under consideration as indicated in Table 3 with Andhra Mahila Sabha topping the list in terms of the total number of respondents could be explained with the information provided by the other kinds of collected data. This was unaffected by the uniformity adopted with regard to the percentages of learners, drop-outs and potential learners in designing the sample for investigation.

Further, the size of the sample, in this regard, was not of much consequence as the investigation was concerned with the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspects of the Adult Education Programme which would also explain why the quantification of results was not treated statistically using highly sophisticated techniques.

The Andhra Mahila Sabha (AMS)--Established in 1937, the Sabha has been engaged in a wide spectrum of social services, including extension of medical services, training of nurses, women's education, teachers' education, adult literacy and condensed educational courses for girls and women. The Literacy House, the second one of its kind in the country, founded in 1972 at Hyderabad by the efforts of the late Durgabai Deshmukh, has become the principal agency of the AMS

for implementation of Adult Education and Literacy Programmes. The AMS first took up the Farmer's Functional Literacy Programme (FFLP) in the late 60's in a backward district of Andhra Pradesh and has subsequently associated itself, at the instance of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, with the running of 10 adult education projects in various districts.

The Bhagavathula Charitable Trust (BCT)--Founded by B.V. Parameswara Rao, an Engineer-turned-voluntary social worker, though registered only in 1976, it has been active since 1967 in diverse fields of educational and economic activities. Inspired by Sarvodaya philosophy, this agency established a high school in 1967, a salt factory in 1969, a Cooperative Farmer Service Centre in 1974 and a Cattle Breeding Plant in 1975, besides sponsoring several income and employment generating projects. The activities of this agency cover Ellamanchili and about 60 villages around it and have appreciably contributed to rural development attempted in this part of the state.

The Comprehensive Rural Operations Service Society (CROSS)--Established in 1975 with its headquarters at Bhongir (35 km from Hyderabad), the CROSS has undertaken comprehensive developmental programmes with the Harijans as its major target group. Operating over an area covering about 120 villages around Bhongir, Motkur and other Taluqs in Nalgonda District, the CROSS has been offering developmental packages through Village Councils called 'Sanghams', which include adult education, development of irrigation sources, dairy development, rural medical education services and agriculture extension services.

Sri Durga Sangh Seva Samaj (DSS)--One of the earliest Women's Organisations in Andhra Pradesh, established in 1960s with its headquarters at Vijayawada (350 kms from Hyderabad), it has as its principal objective the organisation of schemes and projects calculated to make women economically independent by training them in tailoring and other crafts, besides helping them to acquire formal educational qualifications, which necessarily mean undertaking of adult education programmes as well.

ANALYSIS OF EFFORTS OF THE FOUR AGENCIES

The efforts of the aforesaid voluntary agencies were analysed with the help of the data collected through interview schedules. Table 4 sets forth the classification of learners, drop-outs and potential learners by caste and sex.

Table 4 DISTRIBUTION OF CASTE AND SEX AMONG LEARNERS, DROP-OUTS AND POTENTIAL LEARNERS

Caste	Learners		Drop-outs		Potential Learners	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Scheduled Castes	65 (47.45)	19 (55.88)	23 (60.53)	8 (42.11)	10 (30.30)	3 (60.00)
Backward Castes	54 (39.42)	13 (38.24)	11 (28.95)	5 (26.32)	10 (30.30)	1 (20.00)
Forward Castes	18 (13.13)	2 (5.88)	4 (10.52)	6 (31.57)	13 (39.40)	1 (20.00)
Total	137 (100.00)	34 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	19 (100.00)	33 (100.00)	5 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Among the learners and potential learners, considered castewise, the males far outnumber the females, but among drop-outs in the case of Scheduled Castes and Backward Castes the number of male drop-outs is two or three times more than the number of female drop-outs which brings out the fact that in this category there has been greater awareness of the value of education among males than among females. This is borne out by the fact that the number of potential learners belong to the Scheduled, Backward and Forward castes. Further, it may be noticed that the voluntary agencies have been able to draw larger numbers from Scheduled Castes (SC) and Backward Castes (BC) than from the Forward Castes (FC), which is commendable as illiteracy is more rampant among the first two categories than among the last category, and which is in tune with the emphasis laid by NAEP. Furthermore, the mistaken impression that adult education programmes are intended only for SCs and BCs has led to a restricted response from the FCs, thereby exemplifying the influence of the caste factor on the realisation of the objectives of the NAEP.

Table 5, detailing age-wise distribution of learners, drop-outs and potential learners, shows that the greatest response has been from the 21-25 years age group followed by the 15-20 age group, which indicates that the need for acquiring literacy or education is most keenly felt by those belonging to the two groups to find employment.

Again the fact that even those below 14 years and above 36 years of age were admitted into the Centres, as shown the table, underlines three features of implementation of the NAEP by the agencies. The first is that in their enthusiasm for making available the benefits of the adult education programme to as large number as possible, the voluntary agencies enrolled even those who did not fall within the stipulated age limits, i.e., 15 to 35 years; and the second is that for the purposes of showing it as impressive an enrolment as possible, which would have a bearing on the sanctioning of government grants, the voluntary agencies seemed to have enrolled even those who were below 15 and above 35 years of age. The third feature is that on account of inadequate or unsystematic surveys conducted by the agencies with regard to the 'eligible' learners in the given area, some of them were left out because they were not approached at all or asked to join the programme. The enrolment of candidates below the age of 15 and above the age of 35 years created problems of indiscipline in the classroom caused by the tendency of the former to be playful and by that of the latter to come drunk at times to the Centre or to act in objectionable fashion, especially with regard to female learners.

Table 5 AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF LEARNERS, DROP-OUTS AND POTENTIAL LEARNERS

Age Group	Learners		Drop-outs		Potential Learners	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Below 14	16	10	3	-	-	-
15-20	27	10	16	10	6	2
21-25	35	5	7	4	11	2
31-35	19	2	3	1	3	-
36 and above	20	5	3	-	1	-
Total	137	34	38	19	33	5

As the success of adult education programme would depend upon regular attendance of learners at the Centres, Table 6 would be found revelatory in this regard.

Table 6 AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE

Sl.No.	Agency	Average Attendance	Percentage
1.	AMS	25	83.33
2.	BCT	21	70.00
3.	CROSS	22	73.33
4.	DSS	26	86.66

SOURCE: Culled out from the attendance registers maintained by the agencies.

This table shows that of the four agencies, the DSS ensured the highest percentage of attendance followed by the AMS. As regards the other two, though the percentages were comparatively lower, yet these were high enough to be encouraging because of unavoidable causes affecting attendance of learners like: (i) their preoccupation with agricultural operations during harvesting and other seasons, (ii) domestic problems, (iii) illness, (iv) fatigue; and (v) the difficulty of covering long distances everyday to attend the adult education classes, etc. These causes could be found operating even in the case of other institutions or organisations engaged in other kinds of education. But such a conclusion as stated above might not be valid, if the figures concerning the attendance of learners made available by the AECs were exaggerated or inflated, which it would be difficult to establish by merely scrutinising the attendance registers kept at the AEC's concerned. A possible solution would be to arrange 'surprise inspection' by the authorities of voluntary agencies or by government agencies which, in fact, had not been undertaken on any systematic basis. However, it could be stated to the credit of these organisations that they took action against those responsible for it as and when such instances came to their notice. Further, it may be mentioned that the classes were suspended at some centres during the harvesting and such other seasons, when the learners not expected to attend classes.

The problem of ensuring attendance of learners at the AECs is related not only to the causes mentioned above but also to those related to the quality of instruction and the instructors' performance and behaviour in the classroom. Table 7 brings out evaluation of instructors by the learners which shows that the instructors of the BCT were the most efficient followed by those of the CROSS. In the case of DSS, there was a preponderance of old, and incompetent

instructors which, strangely, did not affect the attendance of learners as recorded by the centres concerned. It is remarkable that the employment of inefficient and irregular instructors had made no difference to the attendance of learners, though the quality of instruction might have suffered and the learners' progress at their studies slowed down.

Table 7 LEARNERS OPINION ABOUT INSTRUCTORS

Agency	Good	Old and Ineffec- tive	Unfit	Failed Despite Good Attempt	Rigid	Irregular	Others
AMS	34.5	-	76.5	51.2	10.6	31.4	29.6
BCT	73.0	-	21.6	-	5.4	17.8	16.8
CROSS	56.8	10.4	27.4	-	19.8	19.8	30.6
DSS	23.4	60.6	68.8	59.6	21.6	40.0	31.6

This problem is also related to selection of instructors to man the AEC's, and the mode of their selection. The most commonly followed methods are: (i) interview; (ii) personal knowledge; (iii) contact by the agency; and (iv) village committees' recommendation (see Table 8).

Table 8 METHODS OF SELECTION OF INSTRUCTORS

Sl. No.	Agency	Interview	Personal Contact	Approached by Agency	On Recom- mendation of Village Committee	Total
1.	AMS	-	8	2	-	10
2.	BCT	3	-	-	-	3
3.	CROSS	-	-	1	2	3
4.	DSS	3	-	-	-	3
Total		6	8	3	2	19
						(100.00)

Of these, only two organisations, viz., BCT and DSS, interviewed the candidates, with DSS giving preference to retired or in-service candidates. As for the BCT, a regular Selection Committee was constituted which interviewed the candidates on a wide range of issues to ascertain their interest and suitability. In the case of the AMS, the majority of the instructors (9 out of 10) were appointed on the basis of personal knowledge it had about them. The CROSS, on the other hand, operating through its village Sanghams, mainly confined the selection of instructors to those recommended by them.

But, whatever be the mode, no firm criteria for selection of instructors were followed by any of these agencies. Neither a minimum educational qualification was prescribed nor any aptitude or competence tests were administered. This may be due to the fact that their remuneration was as low as Rs. 50 per month.

As the enrolled learners by the voluntary agencies cannot be expected to buy teaching/learning materials, the agencies concerned have to supply them out of the grant made for that purpose. However, as Table 9 shows, less than 70 per cent of the learners were supplied with slates and pencils, books, and hardly any note-books which might have been due to high cost of the material or their being unable to supply these to those who came in places of the drop-outs.

Table 9 SUPPLY OF TEACHING/LEARNING MATERIALS

Sl.No.	Agency	State	Books	Note Book	Pencils	Slate Pencils	Others
<hr/>							
1.	AMS	61	62	20	38	61	18
2.	BCT	69	61	26	42	67	16
3.	CROSS	62	57	17	-	65	14
4.	DSS	54	51	15	32	56	17

The subjects dealt with the class-room with regard to implementation of Adult Education Programme by the voluntary agencies are set forth in Table 10 which helps in knowing the educational package used in their programmes.

Table 10 PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS REPORTING ABOUT
THE TOPICS TAUGHT AT AEC's

Sl.No.	Subject	AMS N=90	BCT N=27	CROSS N=27	DSS N=27
1.	Alphabet	80	72	74	60
2.	About Village	40	35	30	45
3.	Panchayats	-	25	50	35
4.	Agriculture	45	39	51	56
5.	Animal Husbandry	45	15	35	17
6.	Health	72	64	56	50
7.	Minimum Wages	30	35	50	47
8.	Democracy	-	31	20	-
9.	Family Welfare	45	44	43	22
10.	National Integration	50	31	36	18
11.	Miscella- neous	48	40	31	19

It might be noticed from Table 10 that teaching of alphabets and health education received greatest attention. The other subjects included in the package received different degrees of attention because they were regarded as ancillaries. Moreover, they are of such magnitude that it will not be possible to focus attention on them without reducing the time given to teaching of alphabets and health care since the course was of 10-month duration, although the actual duration did not exceed nine months.

For evaluation of the actual achievement of the learners and the levels of literacy realised (see Table 11), a set of tests were designed keeping in view the objectives of the instruction imparted to the learners. The tests included identification of alphabets of the regional language (Telugu), reading and writing of words and sentences, identification of numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers comprising single digits and two digits respectively, which could be regarded as indicative of the minimum level of achievement expected of the learners.

The texts used for testing were the primers supplied by the agencies to the learners, besides the use of newspapers for testing their reading abilities. For judging the writing ability, learners

were asked to take down the words and sentences dictated to them or in some cases asked to sign their names on slips of paper supplied to them. These tests were based on commonly accepted criteria for assessing the learner's skills in the three R's, viz., reading, writing and arithmetic, and their performance was considered on three levels: (i) all wrong, (ii) slow and partially correct, and (iii) quick and all correct. The administration of these tests proved to be difficult because of the unwillingness, fear or diffidence on the part of the learners to take the test given by a stranger, like the present writer. However, with the assistance of instructors and exercise of persuasive powers, the learners' responses were secured. Any comparative study of the performance of these four voluntary agencies in implementing adult education programmes should take into account the prevalent economic situation in the areas covered by the respective agencies, since those offering opportunities for employment in a greater measure than the others were not able to achieve comparable results because of the fact that employment was more important than learning.

CONCLUSION

The investigation undertaken by the present author has established beyond doubt the need for associating as many voluntary agencies as possible in the implementation of adult education programmes and the valuable contributions that they are able to make. But, the public policy concerning it must be modified or revised to ensure effective participation of voluntary agencies in promotion of adult education. The incrementalist approach to the public policy on adult education hitherto followed by the government would not by itself prove effective if the proposed deadlines and targets for eradication of illiteracy were not strictly adhered to. Moreover, the arbitrariness marking the estimates of the numbers of illiterates as in Andhra Pradesh would render the targets set unreliable and questionable due to the fact that the figures concerning the number of illiterates to be brought within the ambit of adult education programmes were arrived at by subtracting the number of literates from the total population census figure to arrive at the number of illiterates in all age groups in the state of which 20 per cent were regarded as illiterates falling within the stipulated age group of 15 to 35, is not only unscientific but also unjustifiable which could have been avoided through a suitable modification of the format employed for conducting the census. Indeed such a procedure followed for determining the targets concerned, as the one indicated above, underlines the attitude of indifference marking the implementation of Adult

Table 11 LITERACY LEVELS ACHIEVED BY THE LEARNERS

Type of Test	Andhra Mahila Sabha				Bhagavathula Charitable Trust				Comprehensive Rural Operations Service Society				Durga Sangh Seva Samaj				(in percentages)
	All wrong	Slow and parti-ally correct	Quick and all correct	All wrong and parti-ally correct	All Slow wrong and parti-ally correct	Quick and all correct	All wrong and parti-ally correct	All Slow wrong and parti-ally correct	All Slow wrong and parti-ally correct	Quick and all correct	All wrong and parti-ally correct	All Slow wrong and parti-ally correct	All Slow wrong and parti-ally correct	Quick and all correct	All wrong and parti-ally correct	All Slow wrong and parti-ally correct	
1. Identifying Alphabet	2.9	24.2	72.9	1.8	19.2	79	1.9	19.1	79	3.6	38.6	57.8					
2. Reading words	2.4	36.9	60.7	2.1	24.6	73.3	1.7	22.9	75.4	3.9	48.7	47.4					
3. Writing words	25.7	48.3	26.6	19.8	42.1	38.1	18.9	46	35.1	29.2	46.8	24					
4. Reading sentences	11.1	49.4	39.5	9.8	41.2	49	8.1	45.1	46.8	12.1	59.2	28.7					
5. Writing sentences	26.12	48.12	25.8	21.9	42.1	36	29.2	39.5	37.3	31.2	52.6	16.2					
6. Identifying numbers	4.8	15.6	79.6	3.1	12.2	84.6	3.4	11.7	84.9	4.0	18.1	77.9					
7. Adding single digits	72	26.3	1.7	59.0	38.1	2.1	63.0	34.3	2.7	76.0	2.8	1.2					
8. Subtracting single digits	78.1	21.2	0.7	65.0	32.9	2.1	67.1	31.2	1.7	79.1	20.2	0.7					
9. Multiplication & division at single digits	72.7	26.1	1.2	66.1	32.3	1.6	67.1	32.7	0.2	76.9	22.1	1.0					
10. Addition of two digits	76.2	22.6	1.2	67.2	30.5	2.3	69.2	28.6	2.2	79.9	19.1	1.0					
11. Subtraction of two digits	78.1	20.7	1.2	70.1	27.8	2.1	69.9	27.8	2.3	79.9	19.0	1.1					
12. Multiplication and Division of two digits	76.8	21.6	1.6	69.7	28.2	2.1	70.1	27.6	2.3	82.0	16.9	1.1					

Education Programme. This is borne out by the following tables setting forth the targets to be achieved during the period 1979-85 in Andhra Pradesh concerning eradication of illiteracy and what was actually accomplished in that regard, respectively.

Table 12 PHASING OF THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

(in lakh)

Year	Yearly Target	Cumulative Figure
1979-80	2.00	2.00
1980-81	6.00	8.00
1981-82	12.00	20.00
1982-83	24.00	44.00
1983-84	42.00	86.00
1984-85	46.00	132.00

SOURCE: Adult Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1978-79.

Table 13 NAEP IN ANDHRA PRADESH: COVERAGE OF ILLITERATES

(in lakh)

Year	Male	Females	Total
1980-81	1.24	.74	1.98
1981-82	1.36	.62	1.98
1982-83	1.75	.72	2.47
1983-84	1.71	.78	2.49
1984-85	2.22	1.18	3.40
			12.26*

*At the end of March 1987 a total number of 13.63 lakh illiterate adults were covered under the Adult Education Programme in Andhra Pradesh. For details, see Viswanadha Reddy, Kethu, "Sam-pradayetara Vidya (Non-formal Education in A.P.)" in Y.V. Krishna Rao, E.B. Murthy (ed.), Andhra Pradesh Darshini, Hyderabad, Visalandhra Publishing House, 1987, pp. 1217-23.

SOURCE: Records of Directorate of Adult Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

It may, thus, be observed that no appreciable dent has been made on the problem of illiteracy by the implementation of the Adult Education Programme which would call for its implementation on a war footing. This could, in part, be attributed to inadequate monitoring and evaluation of the agencies undertaking NAEP.

The present procedure of evaluation through the use of prescribed proformas calling for an initial project report and monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annual project report has not proved helpful because these proformas have been designed to bring out only the quantitative aspect without reference to the qualitative aspect. The possible corrective would be to get the evaluation done by independent research organisations, especially in states like Andhra Pradesh having low literacy levels and where no officially sponsored evaluation studies have so far been taken up.

The present study²⁴ has also brought out the need for the employment of diversified methods with the accent on qualitative indicators covering such aspects as teaching methods and causes for the so-called wastage (the drop-outs) in Andhra Pradesh which, in fact, has been estimated at 30 per cent while computing the targets.²⁵

Again, the present policy of granting adult education project on a uniform basis to the districts in the state, irrespective of their literacy levels, accounts, in part, for the poor performance. Whatever the justification for following such a policy, adult education programmes will make much headway if voluntary agencies are encouraged to participate in them in as large numbers as possible, especially in areas having low literacy levels. Looked at from this stand point, the State Government's attempts to associate voluntary agencies with the NAEP, despite declared policy, have been inadequate and unhelpful. In fact, no survey of the voluntary agencies has been undertaken by the State Government in order to strengthen their efforts through governmental assistance and no studies have been made to regulate their participation and to coordinate their efforts with those of the state agencies.

The voluntary agencies can evolve flexible learning strategies, which are not subject-based but issue-based to meet the demands of local democracy, in general, and the political and institutional issues obtaining in the areas concerned, in particular. Thus, it may be asserted that without increasing participation of voluntary agencies, it would not be possible even to minimise the prevalence of illiteracy among the masses of our country.

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Legal Aid to Poor and Voluntary Organisations in India

N.R. MADHAVA MENON

AS IN other democracies of the world, the involvement of voluntary organisations--particularly in service-oriented, development-related programmes--has been strong, sustained and varied in India for a long time. The Freedom Struggle under the leadership of dedicated men of vision and humanism gave purpose and dynamism to voluntary effort in organising public life within and outside the government. The growth of the professions of law, medicine, teaching and journalism in the spirit of public service and promotion of a cultural milieu, providing full and equal participation for different religious groups, gave the necessary impetus to individual and institutional efforts for social service and self-reliant growth.

CONSTITUTION AND PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

After Independence, the PEOPLE, having resolved to constitute India into a "Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic", gave to themselves a Constitution which not only provided a charter of basic human rights but also outlined certain "Directive Principles of State Policy" both of which emphasised the role of individual initiative and voluntary action for achieving the goals set out in the Preamble. The scheme of government in its legislative, executive and judicial aspects, both at the Centre and in the states, envisages democratic participation of various interest groups and representative sections of the people giving power and authority to voluntary associations at every level. Political democracy facilitated the movement towards social and economic democracy. As if to reinforce the commitment of the constitution to the PEOPLE and their role in planned development, the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976 introduced a chapter on Fundamental Duties which every citizen individually and collectively has to perform in building up a truly secular, socialist, democratic India.

Article 51A states, "it shall be the duty of every citizen... (b)

to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;... (c) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India, transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities, to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women; (f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture; (g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures; (h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform; (i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence; (j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to high levels of endeavour and achievement." These duties constitute the minimum that citizens are expected to contribute for the welfare of all. Together with Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles, they constitute a grand design for social action and voluntary service. The specific programmes of action include, *inter alia*: (a) education for all at least up to the elementary level; (b) health for all; (c) equal justice for all (free legal aid); (d) special protection for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women and children, (e) prevention of discrimination, practice of untouchability and trafficking in human beings, and (f) activities directed towards secularism, socialism, national integration and international peace. Voluntary organisations, particularly the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have, thus, abundant opportunities and responsibilities in the Constitutional scheme towards an egalitarian, secular, and social order.

The evolution of NGOs and their involvement in nation-building activities, during the last four decades after Independence, show a distinct movement away from purely cultural and religious work towards development programmes directed towards reducing socio-economic inequalities and injustices. With industrialisation and planned development, welfare activities assumed a prominent place in public administration which necessitated popular involvement at different levels. People who have never been in the mainstream of public services before, came to be drawn into social and political processes within the government and outside. With development, other problems related to modernisation and urbanisation also arose necessitating voluntary action to check abuse of power, on the one hand, and to secure distributive justice, on the other. The vastness and diversities of the country and its cultural plurality presented its own problems which demanded moderation, understanding and accommodation in development administration. Despite the process of planning and representative government through periodical political elections, the government machinery was found to be far too inadequate to deliver

the services at adequate level and to maintain rule of law in satisfactory measure. Today, we have reached a stage when the government itself is inclined to withdraw from certain areas of social welfare work and to undertake such work in collaboration with voluntary agencies in some other areas. In short, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and voluntary agencies are rightly beginning to receive greater recognition in every department of public life in our country.

ROLE OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

One can envisage at least two distinct roles for voluntary agencies in the present context in India. The first is the traditional role, of course, with added dimensions, in the delivery of needed services to vast sections of deprived and under-privileged sections of the people. Starting from creation of awareness and mobilisation for self-help, these services may include medical aid, housing assistance, informal education, employment opportunities, legal aid and improved opportunities for self-development. NGOs may either cooperate with government agencies or supplement the government programmes in this direction. Substantial work has already been done by NGOs in this regard and more is now awaited in the context of Planning Commission's recommendation for increased involvement of NGOs in developmental activities. More legislations have been put in the Statute Book in the recent past in which voluntary agencies have been assigned statutory responsibilities for achieving higher standards of success in welfare goals. (Consumer Protection Act, Family Courts Act, Dowry Prohibition Act, Prevention of Immoral Traffic Act, Juvenile Justice Act, Environment Protection Act, Legal Services Authority Act, etc.) While this trend is to be welcomed, what is necessary to be prevented is the loss of identity of the voluntary segment in the administration and its possible domination by an overbearing bureaucracy.

This takes us to the second major role of NGOs and voluntary organisations which is more fundamental for proper social development and nearly crucial for the very survival of such organisations as a legitimate forum for social action. This is the watchdog or ombudsman role of voluntary organisations which includes, inter alia, following functions:

1. Voluntary organisations, through their collective strength, should endeavour to prevent arbitrary exercise of State power by exposing governmental lawlessness and fighting it through all legally permissible methods. In some parts of our

- country, atrocious practices against political dissidents and against people in State custody are still being reported. Organised caste groups and economically powerful interests are reportedly misusing governmental authority to perpetrate social injustices. Social action alone can resist this trend.
2. Efficiency and accountability in public administration are directly proportional to the extent of vigilance and assertiveness of the people affected thereby. The poverty and illiteracy of vast masses of Indian people have, at least in some cases, provided a cover for inefficiency and non-accountability of the civil servants and their political masters. With the dilution of standards of parliamentary institutions and the delay and uncertainty involved in legal processes, more and more sections of people tend to lose faith in democracy and rule of law. Voluntary agencies have a role to arrest this dangerous trend by mobilising social, political and legal action at appropriate levels.
 3. Finally, there is a vast area of professional services for which the government does not always have the primary responsibility. Professions like law, medicine, engineering, teaching, journalism, accountancy, management, etc., have their social responsibilities and professional accountability, discharging of which demands public vigilance and social action. It is unfortunate that in recent times there is a steady decline in the quality of professional services available to the common man and the ethical commitments of professionals are diluted sometimes beyond tolerable limits. People have a right to demand correction from the concerned professionals and their peers. This, in turn, depends on vigilance and prompt action supported by informed public opinion. Social action groups and voluntary organisations have a key role in this regard as well.

The above mentioned comments on the role of NGOs may not be understood as one putting them in an adversary relationship with the establishment. In fact, most of their activities can be successful only in cooperation with governmental agencies and departments. What is necessary to be emphasised is that the role of NGOs is not to be equated with that of government functionaries and, if situations so demand, they must be prepared to question and correct governmental action. If they are not prepared for the latter role, they lose their position as NGOs and cannot claim to be defenders of people's interests in adverse circumstances.

Status and Relevance of Voluntary Organisations

The nature of work that a voluntary organisation can be expected to perform depends on the interests, motivations and competence of its members and the resources it can mobilise. However, in order to maintain its legitimacy and credibility among the people, which incidentally are its greatest assets, its members must have a perception of social justice under the Constitution, a certain degree of expertise in the activity they propose to undertake and a character which demonstrates sensitivity, objectivity, efficiency and commitment to human rights. Voluntary organisations are usually floated by urban middle class people with different motivations and often times without a clear idea of the community they want to serve. The result is frustration and a dysfunctional relationship which is not good either for the server or the served. It is here that the leadership has to understand its responsibilities and organise work only on the basis of mechanisms which ensure standards of quality and performance from every member of the group.

Number of voluntary organisations in our country exist only on paper and number of others are reportedly working in a manner prejudicial to public interest. According to some social workers, we need now an agency to police the voluntary organisations and save the voluntary sector from some of the anti-people, anti-national organisations in the field. They argue that the NGOs themselves should evolve a code of conduct and adopt a mechanism of recognition of voluntary agencies so that the black sheep may be identified and isolated. The problem is too complex and involved. All that can be said now is that there is a clear danger that voluntary agencies and NGOs, which have such a promising role in our democratic development, may get marginalised if public-spirited people do not come forward in larger numbers to strengthen social action and promote people's participation in collective welfare.

VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN LEGAL AID

Discussing the role of voluntary agencies in legal aid, the Report of the Expert Committee on Legal Aid (Government of India, May 1973) stated:

...If legal aid is conceived not as an arithmetical total of instances of official assistance rendered in matters of law to the needy and the indigent but as a movement aiming to secure for the people their just rights, the role of voluntary agencies in any such scheme would be largely self-evident... So far what little legal aid worth the name is available in our country has been

supplied by voluntary agencies. They may be few in number and the scope of their work and impact limited. They have built up an organisation and also channels of communication between those needing legal aid and those who give it.

At least three types of voluntary bodies have been involved in legal aid work in the past. They included bar associations, social service organisations and legal services units of welfare bodies. The Bombay Legal Aid Society has long been rendering legal assistance to indigent clients. The Bharat Sevak Samaj developed a legal aid and advice bureau as part of its social welfare programme. Examples can be multiplied in different regions all over the country. The legal aid functions that voluntary organisations performed or can perform are too many and varied. These include:

1. They can function as effective liaison agencies between the legal aid organisation and the people in need of help. A woman turned out of her house or a child abandoned or neglected, whom the social worker comes in contact with, can be told of her right to maintenance and the process for its enforcement. A victim of a motor accident can be helped to seek immediate compensation provided under law. A worker can be informed and assisted to get his just rights, including minimum wages and compensation for injuries suffered. An arrested person can be helped to seek bail and get back his freedom. By making people aware of the existence of legal aid and guiding them to centres where services are rendered, the social organisations can play a unique supportive role in the delivery of legal aid.
2. Education of people as to their rights and duties, which is one of the major functions of legal aid, can be done effectively by voluntary organisations. They can also help mobilise social action to fight injustice with the support of law. They can identify points on which the existing law hurts the poor or can prove better by minor amendments. Thus, they can be the poor man's lobby for law reform. Publicity for legal aid can also be best achieved through the medium of voluntary agencies.
3. Voluntary bodies can prevent disputes, and when they arise, can resolve them peacefully through conciliation, mediation and arbitration. Their role in Lok Adalat is as important as that of lawyers and judges. Even in group conflicts, such as communal violence, the voluntary bodies can and render a variety of para-legal services and social justice functions.

4. The role of social action groups in resorting to public interest litigation for securing justice to large sections of the poor is now well recognised.
5. Voluntary agencies composed of academics from institutions like colleges and universities can monitor implementation of welfare laws, survey the legal problems of the poor and suggest reforms essential for delivery of social justice. Students can perform a variety of para-legal services to make the delivery of legal aid effective and meaningful to the consumers of justice.

The Expert Committee Report on Legal Aid (1973) not only acknowledged the useful role of voluntary organisations but also recommended their involvement in the National Legal Services Authority at different levels. It was felt that without constant and intensive community participation, the legal aid organisation might lose its sensitivity to the changing legal and social problems of the poor and might become a part of the establishment lacking in response and resilience to the demands made by changing social conditions. It is, therefore, gratifying to note that the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987 passed by Parliament in its last session has incorporated provisions for involvement of voluntary agencies in the scheme of legal aid envisaged under the Act. Besides directing the Legal Services Authority to act in coordination with voluntary agencies in the discharge of its functions (Sections 5, 8 and 11), the Act stipulates that the Authority shall "make special efforts to enlist the support of voluntary social welfare institutions working at the grassroots level, particularly among the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, women and rural and urban labour" in organising the delivery of legal services [Section 4 (m)]. Further, the Act empowers the Authority to recommend to the Central Government grants-in-aid for specific schemes to various voluntary social welfare institutions [Section 4(j)]. It is possible to have representation of voluntary organisations in the composition of the National, State and District Legal Services Authorities envisaged under the Act. Universities and Law Colleges are given special status in the legal aid apparatus in view of their potential for service in the matter of legal literacy, law reform, para-legal training and legal aid support work.

AN EVALUATION

It is perhaps appropriate to conclude this essay with an evaluation of the current status of voluntary involvement in legal aid in the country. Following the two expert committee reports on legal aid

(1973 and 1977) the Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS) evolved a six-point Plan of Action in each of which voluntary agencies have been involved in a big way. Under the CILAS' action plan, during the course of five years (1980-86), over 300 voluntary agencies throughout the country were drawn, in legal literacy programmes, para-legal training and social action schemes, Lok Adalats, Public Interest Litigations, university-based legal aid clinics, and legal aid and advice activities. In order to enable the voluntary agencies to evolve their own programmes, appropriate to their situations, CILAS convened an All India Convention of voluntary agencies and exchanged views and experiences. Many social welfare agencies, which either did not know the potential of legal action or had poor impression about the scope of legal and judicial processes, came to adopt legal aid as another strategy in their kit for social service. CILAS followed it up by giving liberal grants and supportive services to implement the programmes. Voluntary agencies were put in touch with State Legal Aid Boards and social workers were given para-legal courses at the national and regional levels. Legal aid camps and Lok Adalats were organised to demonstrate the utility of legal aid to the common people and to mobilise them for legal action to redress their grievances. CILAS promoted preparation of legal literacy material and got them distributed through State Legal Aid Boards and Social Welfare Organisations. Universities and Law Colleges were invited to open legal aid clinics and, in collaboration with the Bar Council of India, evolved strategies for introducing clinical legal education. A course on "Law and Poverty" was introduced in the LL.B curriculum and study material on the subject was developed jointly with the Bar Council of India. A quarterly Newsletter in English and Hindi was published reporting legal aid activities and educating social workers and voluntary agencies on the technology and practice of legal services to the poor. Specialised projects were devised for target groups, such as women, children, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Today, legal aid is not an unfamiliar concept with the common person in India as it was till 1960s. Over 50 Universities and law colleges have programmes relating to legal aid either integrated with the National Service Scheme or part of the legal curriculum. The SNDT Women's University in Bombay, which incidentally does not have a Law Faculty, is running a legal and counselling centre in cooperation with the city courts. The Nehru Yuvak Kendras and Adult Education Centres have legal aid programmes in many states. The department of Adult Education of Delhi University runs legal literacy courses and maintains legal literacy clubs in over 20 colleges and in as many communities in and around Delhi. Several women's organisations are

totally involved in legal aid programmes with assistance from CILAS or State Legal Aid Boards. Of late, the department of women and Child Development of the Union Government have also taken interest to promote and finance programmes of legal aid relating to women. The Indian Social Institute, a voluntary agency with field offices all over the country, has a separate Directorate for legal aid and is active in legal literacy, para-legal training, public interest litigation, social mobilisation for legal action and law reform. Voluntary effort in legal aid has picked up so fast in India that the Tamil Nadu Legal Aid Board, one of the best legal aid schemes run in the country today with an annual budget of over Rs. 50 lakh, is a voluntary agency registered under the Societies Registration Act. It will not be an exaggeration to state that legal aid acquired credibility and popular support in the course of the last decade largely because of the involvement of voluntary agencies working at the grassroots level and accepting it as part of their strategy for social service. The future of legal aid, as an instrument to fight injustice, will also depend on the extent and degree of involvement that the Act, now adopted, can inspire among voluntary agencies and social welfare organisations.

Constitutional Compulsion of Legal Aid : Role of Voluntary Organisations

S.S. SINGH

THE SPECIAL characteristic of a given law consists in its generality in form and in meeting the needs of the people in substance. Law operates in society. Society is dynamic. So the law should be dynamic and not static. It will die as soon as it becomes obsolete and static. It exists and operates as a guardian and a protector of the interests, aspirations and expectations of the members of the community. In a society, where it is a mere tool of exploitation and oppression in the hands of the ruling class for preservation of *status quo* and stifling progress and development, revolution is inevitable. In the struggle against exploitation and oppression, the same instrument of law will operate as a weapon in the hands of the oppressed. The masses crushed by law having much to hope and nothing to lose will always be dangerous. If laws are their enemies, they are inimical to law. Currently, litigation in court is a weapon of the haves to crush the have-nots and the majesty of equality of law often operates in practice as forensic terrorism. The State, in a new constitutional order and desirous of servicing the cause of humanity, endeavours to protect the depressed, deprived and down-trodden from exploitation, oppression, maladministration, etc.

Justice to all, specially to the poor, weak, deprived and vulnerable sections of community is said to be the corner-stone of nation's stability. Justice delivery system, in a society like ours, where there is a vast gap between the privileged-few and the under-privileged-many, has resulted in credibility gap between the courts and the common man. Thus, an effective legal aid programme, *inter alia*, is not only essential to maintenance of democratic way of life, rule of law and progress and prosperity of the nation, but also a socio-economic *sine qua non*. It would be worthwhile to examine the constitutional position of Legal Aid Programme and explore possibilities, areas and the ways in which the voluntary organisations could be effectively involved in order to remove the legal disability of the consumers of justice.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT

There is no specifically enumerated constitutional right to legal aid under the Indian Constitution. Article 22(1) provides that no person, who is arrested, shall be denied the right to consult and to be defended by a legal practitioner of his choice, but according to the interpretation placed on this provision by the Supreme Court in **Janardhan Reddy's** case, this does not carry with it the right to be provided the services of a legal practitioner at State cost. Sages say that "even out of evil some good also emerges". In fact, legal aid is a product of the era of Emergency. This was the time when a citizen could be detained without assigning any reason; even the Supreme Court refused to entertain writ of habeas corpus to protect personal liberty, nay, held that a citizen could not even ask about the reason for his detention.

Forty-Second Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976 introduced Article 39-A. It merely contains a directive principle of state policy, which enacts a mandate that the State shall provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen for reasons of economic or other disabilities. There is, thus, an obligation laid on the State to provide legal aid but it is not an obligation enforceable in a court of law and does not confer a constitutional right.

The Law Commission of India, in its Fourteenth Report, in 1958 suggested to make provisions for free legal assistance by the State. The matter was also considered by the Bhagwati Committee in 1949, the Third All India Law Conference in 1962, the Gujarat Committee in 1971 and the Expert Committee on Legal Aid in 1973. Though no legislation has been enacted so far, yet legal aid as a constitutional right is available to the needy due to the judicial activism or creativity of the courts in our country. This has been achieved by interpreting Article 21.

The Constitution under Article 21 guarantees that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. This article has been held to be the source of the right to receive legal aid as a consequence of **Maneka Gandhi's** case. So far as the quality of procedure established by law is concerned, Justice Bhagwati (as he then was), speaking for the majority, held that the principle of reasonableness, which--legally as well as philosophically--is an essential element of equality or non-arbitrariness that pervades Article 14 like brooding omnipresence and procedure contemplated by Article 21, must answer the test of reasonableness in order to be in conformity with Article 14. It was

held in **Maneka Gandhi** case that legal aid is a fundamental right implicit under Article 21. The impact of the decision was that the State must take affirmative action in order to provide legal aid to a poor accused.

The Supreme Court, in **M.H. Hoskot** as well as in **Hussainara Khatoon**, held that a procedure which does not make legal services available to an accused person, who is too poor to afford a lawyer and would, therefore, have to go through the trial without legal assistance, cannot possibly be regarded as reasonable, just and fair. It is an essential ingredient of reasonable, fair and just procedure, guaranteed under Article 21, that a prisoner who is to seek his liberation through the court process should have legal services made available to him. The right to free legal assistance is an essential element of any reasonable, fair and just procedure for a person accused of an offence and it must be held implicit in the guarantee of Article 21. The Court, thus, spelt out the right to legal aid in criminal proceeding from the language of Article 21 and held that this is a constitutional right of every accused person who is unable to engage a lawyer and secure legal services on account of reasons, such as poverty, indigence or incommunicado situation and State is under a mandate to provide a lawyer to the accused if the circumstances of the case and the needs of justice so required.

Emphasising the importance and need of the Legal Aid in **Sunil Batra**, the apex court held that the prisoners, who are, by and large, poor and for whom counsel is unapproachable and beyond purchase, the constitutional rights are a myth. Because, where a remedy is all but dead, the right lives only in print. Article 39-A is relevant in this context. Article 19 will be violated in such a case as the process will be unreasonable. Article 21 will be infringed since the procedure is unfair, arbitrary, fanciful and oppressive. And in **Rajendra Dwivedi's** case, the Supreme Court made it clear that Article 39-A is the social objective of equal justice.

The Constitutional imperative under Articles 14, 21, 22, 38 and 39-A visualises and attempts to provide a society in which justice is equally and even-handedly assured to all. If the poor can not bet equally before the law in practice, then the formal equality will fizzle out. It will pose danger to the rule of law and a grave threat to constitutional democracy. It will also destroy democratic values and democratic institutions and pave the way for seeking justice on streets then having faith in the system and the instrumentalities of the State.

Right to legal aid is, thus, designed to protect justice. It is a democratic obligation to make the legal scheme and programme a reality which must champion the cause of workers, peasants, prisoners,

consumers, tenants, tillers, wives, children, victims of official arbitrariness and maladministration and also sensetise the legal and judicial profession to spread legal literacy and provide solution to problems of law and poverty.

In a justice delivery system, where legal services are founded on free enterprise, lawyers can hardly be expected to spread legal literacy and thereby create legal awareness among the people. One of the important aims and objectives of the legal aid programme is to achieve social justice to reduce social disparity. Legal service, in a society governed by the rule of law, is a summons to an inter-professional consortium of lawyers, judges, legislatures, law teachers, students and social workers in order to make law an instrument of justice for those who are in need. At the very beginnig of the consideration of the role of voluntary organisations operating outside the statutory units, question may be raised whether voluntary organisations can play a worthwhile role in providing legal aid to the needy. Manifestly and undoubtedly, the answer is in the affirmative. Then comes the second question as to what role and in which areas the services of the voluntary organisations could be utilised most effectively in the interest of justice to the deprived, vulnerable and indigent sections of our society. And finally, whether voluntary organisations involved in legal aid programme should or should not be controlled by the government or statutory legal aid and advisory committees and board at national or state level.

ROLE FOR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

The object of legal aid, as considered by Krishna Iyer Committee, "is to bridge not only the gap between the rights which they have deserved and that which they have but also the one between the rights conferred to them by law and prospects of their enforcement". It is the prospects of enforceability of rights which makes the rights conferred meaningful and pragmatic. It is said that there is no right without remedy. And an effective remedy depends, *inter alia*, on capability, knowledge, suitability of forum and instruments of justice coupled with adequate resources to enforce one's rights. Finally, it depends on the opportunity of access to justice. If legal aid is conceived of as a movement aiming to spread legal literacy, create awareness and provide prospects of enforcement, the role of voluntary organisations would be self-evident.

It has unambiguously been recognised by the Krishna Iyer Committee as follows: "so far what little legal aid worth the name is available in our country, has been supplied by voluntary agencies". It had been further stressed that these organisations, in spite of several

constraints and compulsions of material and manpower, have played a useful role in the area of legal aid to the people. These organisations have, in due course of time, developed in number, strengthened in structure and established communicational channels between the giver and the receiver of legal aid. Moreover, certain amount of expertise in the field has also got accumulated.

The scope of composition of voluntary organisations in relation to legal aid came to be identified broadly into three categories-- firstly, bodies of lawyers only; secondly, lawyers' wing of social welfare bodies; and, thirdly, social service organisations. Under the first category, reference may be made to the Bombay Legal Aid Society, the Kerala Legal Aid and Advice Society, Madhya Pradesh State Bar Council, Tamil Nadu State Legal Aid and Advice Board and Legal Aid Centres, the National Legal Aid Association of India, etc. These bodies provide aid by referring indigent persons, who have legal problems, to lawyers on their panel. Such bodies, apart from handling individual cases, may also in the new set-up, perform a more fundamental function, namely, identify areas and problems where the law bears harshly upon the poor and the under-privileged and, therefore, in need of amendment. To keep the legal profession alive to its responsibilities, such bodies may also arouse social consciousness among lawyers themselves.

Bodies of lawyers also perform a useful function as wings of social welfare organisations. Of the many in this field, a reference might be made to the Legal Aid and Advice Bureau of the Bharat Sevak Samaj in Delhi, started with a view to assist tenants of slum clearance areas. It has extended its services to the field of landlords and tenants generally. This is its special field of service, though it deals with other types of cases also. The Society for Fair Laws and Justice was recently formed to take up the cases of oppressed landlords. It is working for the repeal of Rent Control Acts. Social Welfare Organisations, which have a lawyers' wing, would be in a better position than bodies consisting exclusively of lawyers to assess the effect of the working of law in particular fields and its impact upon persons who need such legal aid services.

Undoubtedly, legal aid in order to be successful must become a community-wide concern. The community must realise that it is its responsibility and not that of any one section, such as the legal profession. "Legal Aid", says Reginald Heber Smith, "is unquestionably best off and best managed when it becomes a community enterprise with its roots deep in the community from which it draws its support". It has also been suggested by the Bhagwati Committee on Legal Aid that "Legal Aid Committees should not consist exclusively of lawyers but they should also include social and public spirited

citizens drawn from different walks of life who are actively interested in promotion of the welfare of the community". Equal proportion of lawyers, on the one hand, and the social workers and public spirited citizens, on the other, on the Legal Aid Committees was also emphasised by the Bhagwati Committee.

Purely social service organisation can perform a very useful and unique role in the field of welfare activities. The areas of social welfare activities are, such as providing shelter to a women turned out of her home or a child begging on the streets. The social worker or a public interest spirited group can do a lot in these areas and help women and children from becoming destitutes. In such a case, law can be invoked to secure to the persons their rights. It may well happen that the bread-winner of the family is in prison and is unable to furnish bail, or is unaware of his right in this regard. The social worker can get in touch with the right person for securing the legal aid necessary to complete the service rendered by the social organisation. In fact, according to the Supreme Court decision in *Sheela Barse case*, the Tamil Nadu Board has taken steps to visit the jails regularly by appointing panel of lawyers for this purpose. In Maharashtra also, the panel of advocates have been formed to visit the jails. Similarly, visits to juvenile homes may also be planned by panels of lawyers and social workers to examine problems of juvenile delinquents lodged therein. Further, the lawyers and social workers may plan to visit the villages and collect large number of villagers at one place and explain the provisions of laws relating to their problems. Through these rural entitlement programmes, the villagers may be made aware of their social, legal and economic entitlements given in the Constitution of the country, the various Acts, such as: cooperative laws, land laws, debt relief Acts, etc., the progressive pro-poor laws, and poverty focused plans and schemes of the government. In these areas, the voluntary organisations may be mentioned, such as the Bihar Legal Support Society, the Bandhua Mukti-Morcha, the People's Union for Civil Rights, the Rural Entitlements and Legal Support Centres, Banwasi Seva Ashram, etc. Thus, legal enlightenment can be more effectively rendered through voluntary organisations. These organisations can also play a significant role in establishing the channels of communication between the poor and needy and the legal aid organisations.

The voluntary organisations would prove to be the best instrument in achieving the main objective of Preventive and Non-litigative Legal Service Programme. Such programme is a necessity for bringing about socio-economic change. The Preventive Legal Service Programme aims at prevention and minimisation of various kinds of injustices which the poor, as a class, suffers because of poverty. In the Legal

Aid Newsletter, the official journal of the Legal Aid Implementation Committee, Government of India, Justice Bhagwati said, "the preventive legal service programme is calculated to strike at the root of the problem of poverty by seeking to change the social and economic institutions and at the same time, educate and organise the poor, so that they may become conscious and powerful and the institutional changes may become real and permanent".

Finally, what should be the approach of the Central and the state governments towards voluntary organisations operating in the area of legal aid programme? Recently, this question came up before the Supreme Court in *Centre of Legal Research vs. State of Kerala*. Justice Bhagwati held that if the legal aid programme is to succeed, it must involve public participation. If we want to secure people's participation and involvement in the legal aid programme, then the best will be through voluntary organisations or social action groups. But such voluntary organisations or social action groups as suggested by Justice Bhagwati "must not be under the control or direction or supervision of the State Government or the State Legal Aid and Advice Board because voluntary organisations and social action groups should be totally free from any Governmental Controls".

It may, however, be admitted that a complete independence of the voluntary organisations and public spirited groups from government control and supervision is also fought with the danger of corruption and misuse of public money. Though this relates to administrative and financial control, yet the consequences may indirectly affect its functioning as well and render the whole concept nugatory. Hence, it is suggested that partial supervision, especially on financial aspects, over such organisations would go a long way towards the success of the legal aid programme.

SUMMING UP

To sum up, it may be said that legal aid as a constitutional right has come to stay through judicial creativity. However, it needs to be accorded statutory recognition at the earliest.* True success of

* The Legal Services Authorities Bill, 1987 was passed by the Lok Sabha on August 28, 1987 and Rajya Sabha on August 31, 1987 perhaps in a record time. Provisions of the Bill, viz., clauses 4, 5, 6(b), 9(b), 11, 15, 16, 20, 22, 26 and 27 have, particularly, raised the question of constitutional propriety and validity. These provisions

the legal aid programme depends on public participation through voluntary organisations and public-spirited groups. Judiciary should be congratulated for its constructive role in recognising the positive role of voluntary organisations in such programmes. Much remains even now for the organisations and groups to do in the area of legal literacy, rights and entitlements, awareness and consciousness to achieve social justice and encourage and promote conciliation and settlement in legal proceedings. The voluntary organisations and public-spirited groups should receive the recognition accorded to them by the Supreme Court in the true spirit to enable them to go ahead with their programmes to help the poor and needy at their doorsteps with a missionary zeal to realise constitutional objective.

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seem to be devoid of serious consideration, pointed deliberations, measures taken in a haste, and unconstitutional. It is, therefore, suggested that the President should refer the Bill back to the Cabinet for reconsideration or it should be referred to the Supreme Court for advisory opinion under Article 141 of the Constitution. The pertinent constitutional arguments advanced on the Bill by one of our most articulate figures, Mr. V.R. Krishna Iyer, former judge of the Supreme Court, deserves serious consideration.

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Role of Voluntary Agencies in Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders

JAYTILAK GUHA ROY

THE PROBLEM of crime is as old as man himself. It is so eternal and universal that no society has yet been able to provide a 'complete' answer to it. A crime-free society is still no more than a myth or an utopian end. Even affluent, developed societies are not free from the menace of crime. On the contrary, they have to combat with increasingly sophisticated and complicated forms and techniques of criminal activities. As a matter of fact, economic growth alone scarcely seems to be able to check the rising trends in crime.¹ The Sixth United Nations Congress on prevention of crime and treatment of offenders, held at Caracas, Venezuela in 1980 declared, "the success of criminal justice systems and strategies for crime prevention, especially in the light of the growth of new and sophisticated forms of crime and the difficulties encountered in the administration of criminal justice, depends above all on the progress achieved throughout the world in improving social conditions and enhancing the quality of life." The Congress, therefore, called upon all Member-States of the United Nations to "take every measure in their power to eliminate the conditions of life which detract from human dignity and lead to crime, including unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, racial and national discrimination and various forms of social inequality."² Thus, in any country, whether developed or underdeveloped, crime prevention has to be planned and programmed on a long-term basis as an integral part of national planning and development strategy.

Growing problems of crime control in contemporary world, continuing failure of existing criminal justice systems in prevention of crime, alienation of criminal justice from the machinery of social control as well as the people and a quantitative increase and a qualitative worsening of crime in a large number of countries have convincingly proved that no country can deal with its crime problem effectively without broader public participation in programmes and activities of social defence aiming at prevention of crime and treatment, reclamation and rehabilitation of criminals. The oft-quoted

proverb--'prevention is better than cure'--appears to have intimate bearing on crime control. As Bentham observed long ago: "Before an offence is committed, it may give warning of its approach in many ways; it passes through a train of preparations which often allow it to be arrested before it reaches its catastrophe."³ Inadequacy or limitation of existing criminal justice system is that it usually takes cognizance of an offence only after its occurrence and this is why public participation is considered to be "the hall-mark of any successful plan for crime control"⁴ Members of public as representatives of a community can take part in different ways in programmes and activities of crime prevention and control both under governmental and voluntary sectors. However, in pluralistic societies and political democracies as ours, "voluntary agencies have an infiltrating and catalysing capacity which official departments do not possess. To governmentalise social work may, sometimes, knock the people's soul out of it."⁵

PREVENTION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Prevention of juvenile delinquency must be the starting point of any crime control programme. The United Nations' 'Caracas Declaration' recognised that a "high degree of social attention should be paid to the ways in which juveniles are handled, because of their early stage of development."⁶

Although juvenile delinquency is a world-wide problem, there are divergencies in magnitude of the problem consistent with socio-cultural and socio-political differences within and between countries. According to the latest edition of an official report entitled *Crime in India-1982*, there has been "continuous increase" in the number of juvenile crimes during the decade 1972-82. From 5.6 per cent in 1972, the volume of juvenile crime per lakh of population has increased to 8.4 per cent in 1982. Poverty, illiteracy, broken homes or weakening of family ties resulting from increased urbanisation, migration and industrialisation contribute to the growing criminal tendencies among the youth. Official statistics reveal that economic factors are largely responsible. According to the report, in all our states and Union Territories, the majority of the juveniles apprehended during 1982 belonged to the lower income groups (i.e., family earning below Rs. 150 per month).

One of the most effective ways to curb criminal propensities among the juveniles is to provide homes for homeless and hapless children. Voluntary agencies can do a great deal of useful work to this end. The All Bengal Women's Union, for example, has been running its Children's Welfare Home for girls in Calcutta since 1950. This Home

is now taking care of about 250 orphan and destitute girls--which include lost, stray and abandoned children, cases received from prisons, and those rescued by the police facing moral danger. Its welfare programme is a total one which begins from the time of admission and ends with her settlement. Since rehabilitation comes best from employment, the inmates are given primary and high school education plus vocational training. Those who show an aptitude are also given the chance for training in nursing and teaching outside the Home. Over the years, hundreds of the Home's girls have found employment as craft and school teachers, village welfare workers, nurses, typists, and domestic helpers. For those skilled women, who are unable to find any employment outside, work centres have been opened in the Home's own premises. Wages are paid to these women and their work has a good market. Had the Home not given them help in their childhood, these useful citizens would have most likely been trapped for ever in a web of crime.⁷

The Ramakrishna Mission Boy's Home at Rahara in the vicinity of Calcutta is another institution doing commendable philanthropic work for orphan and destitute boys. Started in 1944, with only 37 orphan boys, the Home now provides shelter for some 700 boys--all orphans and destitutes or sons of poor tribals. It has devoted itself not only to rearing these boys into manhood but also bringing about their social rehabilitation.

While more such homes are necessary, in view of limited resources, other less costly preventive programmes also need to be devised, such as imparting free primary and vocational education to poor children especially those living in slums and in areas with high crime rates, providing counsel to parents and rendering after-care services to released juvenile offenders. Voluntary organisations, whether secular or run by religious groups, are well-suited to take up these programmes.

The Central Children Act of 1960 as well as the State Children Acts* provide for custody, protection, care, education, training and rehabilitation of destitute, deprived, dependent, deviant and other socially handicapped children. In some states, viz., Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, short-term institutions--such as Remand/Observation/Auxiliary Homes, Reception Centres. Probation and Aftercare Hostels--and long-term institutions--such as Certified/Approved/Special/Reformatory Schools--have been established by the Children Aid Societies and other voluntary agencies for

* These Acts have now been replaced by Juvenile Justice Act, which is scheduled to take effect from 2nd October, 1987.

implementation of the Children Acts.

The problems of juvenile delinquency is stupendous and growing and deserves urgent attention. Juveniles are in need of community care and assistance both before and after the onset of delinquency. Since the children of today are citizens of tomorrow, efforts put in to save them from going astray are our investment for the country's future.⁸ Justice Mulla Committee on Jail Reforms, therefore, suggested that special voluntary social service institutions should be helped to come up for protection and welfare of children and youth facing moral danger.⁹

INSTITUTIONAL AND NON-INSTITUTIONAL TREATMENT OF WOMEN AND OTHER ADULT OFFENDERS

Next to juvenile delinquency, the problem of female criminality should receive special attention in crime control programmes in view of the vital role of women in their capacity as mothers in the family. Unfortunately, because of the small number of women offenders throughout the world, they often do not receive adequate attention and consideration and this often results in limited access for women to the necessary programmes and services, including placement in detention facilities, far from their families and home communities. The 'Caracas Declaration', therefore, emphasised the need for deinstitutionalisation as an appropriate disposition for most women offenders to enable them to discharge their family responsibilities.¹⁰ Deinstitutionalisation requires that programmes and services used as alternatives to imprisonment are made available to women. Probation, for instance, is a non-punitive method of dealing with offenders as well as an acceptable substitute for imprisonment. The chief aims of probation are: (i) to prevent further development of the criminal intentions in the offenders, and (ii) to accomplish their rehabilitation by returning them to their natural setting in the free community with a chance to rectify themselves during a period of supervision instead of sending them to the unnatural and too often socially harmful atmosphere of prisons. It is, however, the rehabilitation element that actually gives meaning to the preventive aspect of probation.

It is generally believed that the probation system is effective, particularly in cases of juvenile and first offenders. But as a matter of fact, even carefully selected recidivists can effectively be brought under this system. As M.A. Subramaniam has aptly pointed out, "Rehabilitation is the true antidote for recidivism generally and most of the recidivists are anxious to come back to normal life at some stage or other because their very nature and conscience

yearns for freedom and recognition. Unless compelled by adverse conditions, the majority may not want to revert to crime. Probation takes note for this fundamental trait in human nature and works upon it."¹¹

Voluntary organisations can help in application of probation by setting up Societies and Homes for the rehabilitation of probation cases. The members of these organisations may also function as Voluntary Probation Officers. Under Section 13(1)(b) of the Probation of Offenders Act 1958, a person provided for the purpose by a 'Society' recognised in this behalf by the state government can be appointed as Probation Officer. Unfortunately, most of the state governments have not so far evinced much interest to utilise the services of voluntary probation officers. As the Mulla Committee have very poignantly observed: "The Indian probation system is seriously handicapped for want of adequate number of departmentally paid probation officers and this deficiency can be effectively remedied by utilising the services of voluntary workers".¹² Voluntary women organisation will be particularly helpful and effective in dealing with female probation cases.

The services of voluntary women organisations may also be utilised for institutional treatment of female offenders. In the women's section of Calcutta's Presidency Jail, for instance, some voluntary agencies have been rendering invaluable service in imparting, both general and vocational, education to prisoners. The pioneer organisation in this field is the Prison Reform Committee of the National Council of Women in India which, in addition to other programmes, have organised since 1955 *Ramnam Kirtan*, *Bhajans* and reading from the *Ramayana* twice a month on Sundays. This has proved very popular and now continues with a government grant. They have also started a nursery class for lost and stray children and those accompanying their mothers to jail. Other voluntary organisations functioning here are the *Scroptimist International* of Calcutta and the *All Bengal Women's Union*. With cooperation from jail authorities, they have successfully taken up programmes, such as training in art and crafts, manufacture and sale of greeting cards, table-mats, etc. The latest addition to these programmes is manufacturing of cigarette packets by hand-operated machines through the collaboration of a leading tobacco company. Prisoners are paid for their work too. The success of these programmes calls for an extension of voluntary services to other prisons in the country, covering both male and female offenders.¹³ The Mulla Committee have also suggested *inter alia* that community groups can be organised as **Friends of Prisoners**: (i) to organise functions on national days and other festivals in prisons and allied institutions; (ii) to work for reconciliation between

prisoners and their victims or between prisoners and their own families so as to facilitate their smooth return to homes after release; (iii) to provide foster homes for the dependent children of prison inmates; (iv) to collect books, magazines and journals and distribute them to prison inmates for their leisure-time reading; (v) to come to prison to spend some time with small groups of prisoners to help them in easing their tension and to afford them an opportunity to open up and express their feelings; (vi) to extend counseling and guidance to inmates for their current problems and future rehabilitation; (vii) to organise lectures and audio-visual demonstrations in prisons on secular moral topics and on social education for the benefit of inmates.¹⁴

AFTER-CARE OF RELEASED PRISONERS

After-care of released prisoners as one of the most effective means to curb recidivism constitutes an integral part of crime control programmes and activities. An offender, immediately after release from prison, has to face a lot of social and personal problems, such as loss of family contacts, lack of suitable employment opportunities, social stigma of prison sentence and so on. It is for a solution of these serious problems that a discharged offender needs community's solace, sympathy, help and care without which he will, in all probability, find no other alternative but to revert to crime. Absence of after-care, therefore, gives rise to recidivism.¹⁵

"After-care", to quote the Model Prison Manual, "is the released person's convalescence. It is the bridge which can carry him from the artificial and restricted environment of institutional custody, from doubts and difficulties, hesitations and handicaps to satisfactory citizenship, resettlement and to ultimate rehabilitation in the free community."¹⁶

The Western experience of correctional work reveals that there is ample scope for work by voluntary agencies in the after-care of released prisoners. An ideal after-care scheme should begin at the commencement of the sentence. Starting from interviews with offenders at the court immediately after sentence, the functions of voluntary agencies can be extended to a wide variety of programmes, such as group work with prisoners and their wives and families during sentence, looking after children during mothers' visits to prison, providing transport to prisons, support and advice to offenders and their families in their own homes after discharge, setting up of after-care hostels for accommodating homeless ex-prisoners, supportive work with homeless ex-prisoners living in lodgings or hostels, helping offenders to find employment and to take part in community life,

etc.¹⁷

In the developed countries of the West, voluntary social and religious organisations have been doing a lot of extremely useful and humanitarian work in connection with after-care of released prisoners. In India, the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society was established for the first time in Uttar Pradesh as far back as 1894. Thereafter, such societies were set up in the then provinces of Madras, Central Province, Punjab, Bengal and Bombay between 1921 and 1933. Apart from helping the released prisoners in their social and economic rehabilitation, these societies also rendered invaluable service for reclamation of habitual offenders, prevention of casual and juvenile offenders from becoming habituals. But unfortunately, some of these societies have already been closed down for want of funds, adequate governmental support and recognition. Those which still exist are the UP Crime Prevention Society, All India Crime Prevention Society, Madras Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society and Maharashtra State Probation and After-care Association.¹⁸ Emphasising the need for revival of after-care programmes, the Mulla Committee suggested that efforts should be made to set up at least one voluntary organisation in each district to which the work of extending help to released prisoners could be entrusted. "It should be the policy of the government", says the Committee, "to encourage formation of voluntary organisations for taking up programmes for the help of released prisoners. Such voluntary organisations should be given financial and other help to make it easier for them to carry on this work. Voluntary workers devoting considerable part of their leisure time to such work should be socially recognised."¹⁹

PROBLEMS AND WEAKNESSES OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN INDIA

Paucity of funds and lack of adequate governmental support and cooperation are largely responsible for the fast decline of voluntarism in the social welfare sector in general. Unfortunately, more than the problem of funding or official assistance, almost every voluntary organisation in India now suffers from an acute shortage of devoted volunteers. An empirical study of public participation in social defence in the cities of Lucknow and Kanpur of Uttar Pradesh by S.P. Srivastava also confirmed this sorry state of affairs. A larger number of elderly respondents in this study nostalgically recalled the glorious tradition of voluntarism in India during the pre-independence days. The spirit of samaritanism, according to them, has witnessed an almost total eclipse in recent times when the people have become totally self-centered. In their opinion, the chief reasons for the decline in the number of voluntary social

workers today were: (i) the change in the traditional pattern of living, (ii) progressive decline of moral standards with modernisation and city living, (iii) eclipse of older traditions and informal social control, (iv) diminishing sense of civic responsibilities, and (v) emergence of a loveless, conscienceless and emotionally cold individual.²⁰ The study has also identified internal groupism, bureaucratic attitude of senior members of the agency staff, lack of trained and skilled volunteers, lack of adequate support and cooperation from the parents/guardians/relatives of the inmates of social defence institutions, and corruption and abuse of authority by the agency staff as some of the major problems of voluntary social defence organisations.²¹

CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion leads us to an inescapable conclusion that voluntary agencies have a great role to play in prevention and control of crime as well as in institutional and community-based treatment programmes for the juvenile, youth, female and all other deviants. There is indeed immense scope for work by voluntary agencies in these fields. The ranges of tasks available to them would, however, vary in accordance with the contribution that they would be able to make, and the items of work mentioned in this article are only illustrative but in no way comprehensive. Apart from socio-cultural environment becoming conducive to voluntary service, the success of voluntary agencies is largely conditioned by governmental support and cooperation. While governmental interference in the autonomy of voluntary agencies in lieu of patronage is detrimental to their success, periodical evaluations of their performance by non-official experts appointed by the governments are necessary. In the ultimate analysis, however, the enduring solution to the growing problems of crime control would hinge on the political will to bring about rapid socio-economic development for the welfare of deprived, depressed and downtrodden people of the country.

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Banks-NGO-Poor Interface in Backward Regions : Alternatives for Action*

ANIL K. GUPTA

NUMEROUS STUDIES have shown that access of poor to formal banking systems has considerably improved in recent years in most parts of the country. The flow of credit, physical coverage, diversity of purposes and flexibility in the method of disbursing credit has considerably increased. However, the access of some of the most disadvantaged people in the risky ecological contexts (or backward regions, like drought or flood-prone regions, tribal, hilly areas, etc.) has remained constrained. Even in the remaining regions, there is a considerable scope for improvement in the quality of follow-up and effectiveness of these interventions. The need of improvement in backward regions should take precedence over the need for reforms in developed and better endowed regions simply because the market forces are much stronger in the latter type of areas and hence even the poor are not under so much stress here.

Given the serious nature of the problem in backward regions, it was considered necessary to study the alternatives that are available for Banking innovations in the country. This study consolidates innovative experiences wherever they were found (rather than those from the backward regions only), along with emerging new issues in the field, in view of policy implications (for this purpose, wherever

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necessary, the need of future data has been outlined). The study has not been restricted only to those implications which involve the NGOs because: (1) The alternatives for improving the access of poor to banking system cannot be made contingent to the availability of NGOs only since in the regions where the market forces are weak the voluntary initiatives are also not expected to be too many (the preliminary studies by GIAP in Gujarat seem to confirm this). (2) The structural problems of mismatch between the design of supply system in risky ecological regions with the needs and demand from the poor cannot be resolved by taking recourse to the benevolent intermediaries, like NGOs. The voluntary organisations can facilitate supply or even demand but they may not like to or be able to influence the policies which guide the operating decisions of the banks at micro-level. Even if they bear the risk as they indeed do in many cases, the very nature of such adjustments make these non-replicable. After all, the state concerned with bridging regional imbalances and income disparities cannot leave the challenging task of catering to the demand of poor in some of the most disadvantaged regions to market forces or just the individual initiatives or imagination of sporadically born NGOs.

However, the possibility of modification in public policy is recognised whereby more and more NGOs may be motivated to bring poor and the bank together in backward regions in a manner that productivity of various factors improves.

Agenda for Policy and Procedural Changes

The key problems to be covered are: (1) Generation of demand for credit; (2) Organising supply of credit of appropriate size, purposes, duration, etc., with the necessary risk cover; (3) Managing follow-up of credit (in particularly low population density regions, where costs are very high) to ensure proper repayment; (4) Building appropriate links with technology and markets; and (5) Developing appropriate links with NGOs wherever genuine activists are available so that in either role as Bridge, Broker or Benevolent Bania (see Gupta, 1987) they enhance permanently the capacity of the poor to gain access to banks and convert demand into a supply leading to repayment and increased level of living.

The policy alternatives for tackling different dimensions need not be mutually exclusive, i.e., same policy change could affect the generation of demand as well as improve the effectiveness of supply.

ORGANISING ACCESS AND CREATING DEMAND--ISSUES.1

Several initiatives have been taken up in this regard, such as

dispersing more widely the network of bank branches; broad-basing the institutional structure through revitalisation of cooperatives and setting up of RRBs; opening specialised branches, such as GVK, ADB, IRDB, etc.; making business hours more flexible; providing a day off in rural areas just for follow-up as well as rapport building, etc. This is in addition to the concessionary credit and diversification of schemes, easy refinance and simplification of procedures to some extent.²

The access has been affected by several structural features such as uniform population coverage norms for the entire country; very high number of loan accounts per officer between 6,000 and 7,000 in many cases after IRDP; restricted mobility (branch managers providing loans without the assistance of field officer are not provided any bank vehicle); ambiguity about role of district administration, state development corporation, various departments like forests and revenue, which, in turn, generate counter-productive tendencies; the high average size of loans with generally shorter repayment periods; lack of rehabilitationary policies in the event of risks; absence of portfolio approach to financing, etc.³

Organisation of poor into effective demand groups has been considered a necessary condition for improving access for a long time. Several initiatives have been tried, such as group lending or group guarantee; FSS (Farmers' Service Societies) and involvement of NGOs. The experience of SEWA Bank and Grameen Bank has added further strength to the notion that groups of people provide more effective basis of mobilising demand (both in terms of cost of providing credit and in ensuring efficient use)⁴.

In certain cases, the voluntary organisations have mobilised demand on the strength of the guarantee deposits put with the banks. Such an alternative has only limited replicability though it offers useful insight into working of banking system. Given the assurance of repayment, banks would not mind soft-peddling other issues.

Certain state corporations, marketing and/or processing utilities help banks in mobilising demand through either formal tie-ups or tripartite contracts (between borrower, bank and the firm) or informal assurances (or prices or procurement or even repayment as in case of some dairies). These tie-ups underline the need for expanding the meaning of formal banking services. Perhaps, if such tie-ups don't exist, they may need to be forged. The experience of sugar cooperatives, however, indicates a need for caution because of mounting overdues in areas where firms have made profits, farmers have prospered, and the infrastructure has improved but bank loans have become sticky. The supply as usual continues.

In some cases, if primary access (i.e., access of poor to

resources whether private or common property, such as traditional rights in forest lands), is constricted through state policies, improving secondary access (i.e., to the banking system) sometimes becomes less advantageous.⁵

Thus, all the three vectors of human survival--access, assurance and ability--have to be simultaneously considered while appraising the policy alternatives.

The policy alternatives listed here, thus, take into account two aspects of human survival in a mixed economic system. **Firstly**, the access of the household to natural or other resources. Assurance from public systems or private institutions about various aspects of future flows from present investments and the ability or skill to overcome risks, convert resources into productive outputs and market these. Thus, the technology (i.e., using skills), institutions (providing assurances) and ecological factors (access to natural and other derived resources) have to be taken into account at the same time.

Secondly, the transaction costs involved in any exchange between two and more parties have to be generally borne by the weaker partner. In this sense, the policy reform is essentially a politico-economic process to improve bargaining capacity of poor disadvantaged vis-a-vis stronger exchange partners, including the bank.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES: REFLECTION TO ACTION

In management science, it is often believed that best should not be allowed to become the enemy of the better. Sometimes better can indeed delay the process of pursuing the best by generating complacency and apathy. Incrementalism, so characteristic of policy reforms in bureaucratic settings, has come to be accepted as a norm rather than just an expedient solution to structural problems. Our position is that planners must reflect on the costs of not making several changes at one time and thereby reducing the effectiveness of every change made slowly and over a period of time sequentially. The costs of making changes--the psychological and material--also have to be taken into account while evaluating the benefits.

The need for improving economic and social survival strategies of poor in backward regions is being recognised today so urgently not merely on equity grounds but also because much of the rural-urban migration (making urban systems burst at seams) emanates from backward regions, like drought-prone and flood-prone areas, hills and tribal regions.

Further, certain investments, such as in the livestock, watershed management, agro-forestry, non-farm activities; food crops like

oilseeds and pulses have also to be made in these regions on efficiency grounds.

Problem of low credit absorption capacity in backward regions and high risk aversion by banks generates a very paradoxical situation. The pockets where the risk, rate of interest in informal credit market, need for credit and marginal productivity of investment is highest, the flow of formal credit is least. It is not only because banks are risk averse but also because the term at which credit is offered, the demand for the same is very low. Thus, the need for modifying the terms of supply so as to stimulate the demand in such regions.

Transaction cost inherent in the provision of small and disbursed loan (over space and time because of seasonality of most of the activities) could be reduced by the bank in either of the following ways: (1) By making bank mobile and thereby reducing the cost of information search as well as recovery. (2) Organisation of borrowers and provision of group loans with individual as well as collective responsibility. (3) Loans through voluntary organisations which will mobilise demand and follow-up utilisation and recovery. (4) Through marketing tie-ups, which may independently exist for procurement as well as marketing of the output.

The case studies would have to provide relative advantages or disadvantages through the experience that may be available of various trade-offs. If the same agency has tried different approaches, then cost effectiveness of one over another should be attempted in some approximate manner. It is possible that service contracts may be offered to NGOs or leaders of farmers or labour groups by giving a proportion of recovery just as commission is given to the small saving collection agents.

Role of Risk in Credit Demand and Supply

The space, season, sector matrix, given in Fig. 1, makes it quite apparent that in low population density spaces with diversified economic activities, it is natural that seasonality should be high and vice versa.⁷

The implications for policy are that if the flow of credit is low in the season when the artisans, labourers or farmers in a given backward region are employed, then there is a problem. The costs of providing credit in such regions are large, the manpower availability low, branch network poor and, as a consequence, the time lag in supply of credit may be higher. Thus, the regions in which poor can tolerate least delay due to high seasonality, the institutional efficiency will have to be very high. The project should provide some operational implications of achieving higher efficiency.

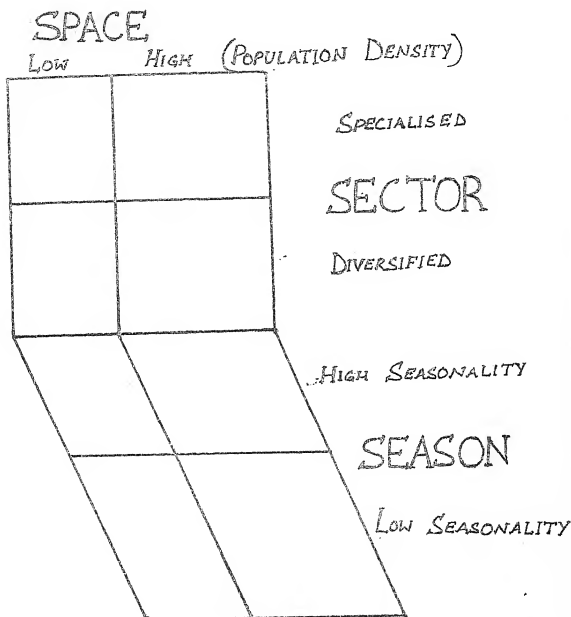


FIG. 1

The policy alternatives emerging from the case studies completed so far have been analysed primarily from the point of view of various risks that borrower as well as banks face. Recognising the limitations of the sample, these alternatives only underline the need for changes since even in better endowed conditions, the access of the poor would not improve without these changes.

The risks that bank may face may involve choice of right or wrong beneficiary, estimation of his cash flow or other skills appropriately or inappropriately; risk on its default even if borrowers get the surplus because of lack of follow-up, etc. On the other hand, the borrower faces the risk which could be environmental, political,

market, economic and even personal, such as health or other unknown catastrophies.

IMPLICATIONS FROM CASES

Sewa Bank

One of the most important risk that SEWA as a 'movement' covered for the borrowers of SEWA Bank as an 'institution' concerned the very right of poor women pursuing their vocation. For most of the poor in unorganised sector, the employment through use of common property resources or public goods, such as pavement, roadsides, parks, etc., poses tremendous risk. The legal, political and other social hardships can come about if the access of poor to the common property resources or public goods is not assured. SEWA, as a movement, pursued the rights of these unorganised self-employed women by organising them. Without this assurance, the Bank would not have been able to cover many of them as rightful borrowers.

The policy implication is that wherever organisations or movements for organising poor people exist, these should be strengthened through supportive economic institutions, such as SEWA Bank (or Vikalpa in Saharanpur).⁸

The existence of loan committee in the bank is a useful innovation, particularly when the cost of doing individual inspection by only one officer are very high and time consuming. By coopting reputed referees (who could be earlier borrowers or members of SEWA) on the loan committees, risk of wrong identification is considerably reduced. The banks may be advised to attempt forming of such committees for scrutiny of applications at village and branch levels in an open manner so that both the selection as well as rejection are publicised and properly understood.⁹

By not distinguishing the production and consumption needs very precisely, SEWA has underscored one of the most basic characteristics of poor households, i.e., if majority of the income comes from labour and if most of the expenditure is on necessary consumption, then these two needs cannot be sharply distinguished. In this sense, SEWA has also adopted a flexible approach by financing an activity without neglecting the implications of that activity for other vocations of the borrower.¹⁰

The policy implication is that bank should not insist on appraising only an enterprise while appraising credit needs of poor households but take into account the entire gamut of economic activities the household is engaged in. As further illustrated by the case studies, SEWA has also taken recourse to liquidation of old debts which is necessary for giving a good head-start to any economic

entrepreneur.

The transaction cost of SEWA Bank are considerably reduced by taking recourse to the reference as well as monitoring through the members of SEWA. So much so that SEWA Bank spreads a word about those referees, who are known for recommending good cases.¹¹ This has very interesting policy implication insofar as the recovery of loan to the poor is concerned. It is well known that in any rural society, there are traditional leaders among the poor who take initiative in gaining access to the bank. Banks by observing closely, in a discriminatory manner, can help the emergence of positive leadership or what may be euphemistically called good brokers.

The counters many times are converted into corridors when borrowers cannot engage in exchanges openly in the banks. SEWA, by not restricting the movement of borrowers to various people in the bank, encouraged an openness in terms of access of poor to the various authorities in the banking system. One can argue that since SEWA bank is dealing with only one set of clients and one set of economic transactions, such an informality did not pose many problems. The banks which deal with large number of activities and different types of clients may find this alternative to be difficult. However, the setting up of separate centres or branches for rural lending cannot any more be considered a costly proposition given the scale of rural lending.

It is well known that number of accounts per officer have increased tremendously after IRDP in the banking system. Unless and until innovations with regard to formation of borrowers committees, appointment of collection agents as attempted by SEWA, who collect the instalments from the door of the borrower, are made, the cost of banking system are not likely to be reduced. This will obviously reflect on the quality of lending.¹²

There are certain other aspects of SEWA working, which also need to be noted. For instance, SEWA tried to improve the managerial and monitoring skills among the poor enhancing their self-reliance potential in the process. At the same time, sufficient attention was not paid to develop organisational learning mechanisms. For instance, whenever any costing studies were done for different economic enterprises, no system was developed by which such information base would be periodically updated to enable the bank to make proper estimation of credit needs. Likewise, in the case of post-riot rehabilitation, SEWA did play a very important role, both politically as well as socio-economically, but the role of SEWA Bank was not very clear.¹³ Even though by informally accepting the delay in repayment for genuine reasons, this bank did show consideration towards the poor women. However, by not rescheduling the loans, the overdue figure

was unnecessarily enhanced. At the same time, there was scope for rehabilitation of some of the cases where means of production may have been totally liquidated during the riots in the city.

Banks do normally prepare area-wise monitoring sheets or ledgers. However, the innovation in case of SEWA Bank was to use not merely area-wise but also referee-wise monitoring schedules for their monitoring agents so that the rapport between bank and borrower was not snapped even if the default took place. Suggestions have been made earlier about use of credit maps as well as to follow seasonal, spatial and sectoral monitoring systems. NABARD may like to issue comprehensive guidelines in this regard so that discriminative monitoring can be practised. This will also help establishing an organic link between DOM as well as banks' own monitoring system.

SEWA Bank has encouraged savings as an important part of banking activities. However, it might be useful to establish a risk fund through the contribution of the borrowers to take care of genuine problems of borrowers.¹⁴ Grameen Bank in Bangladesh by developing such a fund follows a two-tier approach to lending. While the groups of borrowers can borrow from the bank for their necessary needs, in some cases when the groups have sufficient funds of their own, they can lend to individual members at a lesser rate of interest but higher than the saving rate provided by the bank. This is a useful innovation which can generate self-reliance not at the level of individual borrowers but at the level of group of borrowers.¹⁵

Syndicate Agricultural Foundation (SAF)—Farming Clinic

Promotion of a bridge organisation by a bank which is managed by the same people but has a separate balance sheet and constitution is an extremely interesting innovation in organisational and budgetary terms. The organisational innovation is that in the role of SAF office bearers, Syndicate Bank employees can perform those activities which as a bank employee they may not be able to perform. Further the developmental role would impinge on their bureaucratic role and hopefully modify that.

The budgetary innovation is that mobilisation of external resources is possible and large number of developmental activities could be taken up. Banks have generally felt hesitant to promote such activities within their own system.¹⁶

The appointment of field assistants by the Syndicate Agricultural Foundation in the farm clinic attached to a Syndicate Bank branch provides a means of reducing the monitoring cost of the bank. It also improves rapport building with farmers. Since the field assistant lives in the village, he also helps the bank in getting access to lot of information about the borrowers which in the usual system is

almost impossible to collect. The policy implication is that banks may be encouraged to appoint, either on project basis or scheme basis, assistants who can help in mobilising recoveries and even savings. Banks do have small saving collection agents. However, they have not yet thought of appointing recovery agents who could do the saving function as well.¹⁷

One of the basic premises of farm clinic approach is data base planning. The bench-mark survey provides the basis for preparing farm as well as credit plan for each borrower. While it is quite likely that such an activity might appear very cumbersome, given the scale of operations and uncertainty in the environment, the concept has a merit that leads to case-by-case approach in developing credit programme. Bank does not feel handicapped in developing new scheme if the need so arises. Also, the unit cost of enterprises do not come in the way because of the availability of the data base which can justify the deviation. We need more data to establish these implications.

The monitoring and feedback system developed by the bank is a useful innovation insofar as it deals with keeping a close track of the activities of farm clinic. There are several suggestions which have been made in the case study to strengthen the system. Certain questions are still being pursued to find out the cost-effectiveness as well as programmatic utility of the clinics. For instance, is the proportion of poor borrowers higher in farm clinic villages compared to non-farm clinic villages; is the recovery in the farm clinic villages higher than the non-farm clinic villages of the same branch; whether the diversification of portfolio is higher in farm clinic villages and whether bank has modified at all its policies or procedures in the light of the feedback from the intensive monitoring possible under farm clinic approach.

The flexibility is an important feature of farm clinic working in terms of working hours, recruitment of farm assistants, promotion of non-banking developmental activities, such as agricultural demonstration, adult education, afforestation, etc. This only underlines that development of credit portfolio does call for certain additional developmental activities in the villages which banks would have to find a way of strengthening.¹⁸

We do not have evidence that farm clinics have also helped in perhaps better rescheduling or rehabilitation of genuinely affected enterprises due to environmental or market contingencies. However, we will collect data to find out more about this. If found true, this would be an additional strength of this approach.

Diviseema Social Service Society (DSSS)

Even though this case study was very preliminary, the findings nevertheless are quite interesting and can indeed form the basis of some speculation regarding policy changes.

There exist in rural areas, traditional forms of organisation, such as Moota System in the cyclone-prone region, where DSSS worked. By building upon these traditional forms of organisations, DSSS has reduced its risk in term of viability of the organisations because these organisations were tested. Banks might consider indentifying such traditional forms of cooperation and social organisation, which are still existing in majority of the backward regions. This will also help in reducing monitoring and follow-up costs of the bank.

The group responsibility, which was a sort of group guarantee, was found to be helpful in this case even though there are experiences where group guarantee has failed because it was implemented only in letter and not spirit.

The saving schemes aimed at promoting thrift were linked with credit programme in a very viable manner. This has been one of the major weakness of lending programmes in the entire banking industry. No clear linkage has been maintained between these two functions of an economic enterprise.

The backup educational efforts by DSSS as well as technological interventions were used as was the case in most other NGOs.

One of the most distinctive innovations of DSSS, which must be given due importance in the banking system, was the conceptualisation of crop pests as the common property resources (CPR). While academic studies have been done on the subject and it has been found that in backward areas where pests are a major problem in the cropping system, there is no alternative but to take up pest control collectively on CPR basis. However, this would not be possible unless banks would consider the recommendation made under the policy options study "regarding contracting, curative and consulting services". It is possible that many more such problems would be found, which call for group solutions and would, therefore, require contracting such functions to either existing groups or new groups or intermediaries, such as commercial dealers dealing with the relevant inputs. It is also possible that the integrated pest management systems may have to be developed to reduce the risk of individual borrower through group effort. Such systems would require investment in terms of location-specific research and development for which banks should be able to develop an alternative system of collaboration with other departments.

The NGO in this case had planned for dispensibility and also through periodic evaluations tried institutional renewal. It is

useful to ask a question as to whether banks can develop contractual relationship with NGOs for time bound phasing out such that self-reliant groups could come about. It should be noted that such groups could not be expected to come up within 5-7 years since it takes far longer than that for collective consciousness to emerge.

Case by Gujarat Institute of Area Planning (GIAP)

Both case studies, i.e., on Lok Bharati (LB) as well as NLRDF¹⁹ brought out several important features, some of which already have been mentioned earlier. The distinctive feature of GIAP case studies vis-a-vis IIM case studies is the involvement of industrial houses directly or indirectly in providing resources for developmental activities. Further, the credit was one of the many activities which these NGOs had taken up. Again, as it was found in the case of DSSS, the guarantee deposits or the incentive deposits did play a useful role in motivating bankers to lend.

The progressive reduction of the amount of loan relief in case of NLRDF could be considered a positive feature in terms of promoting self-reliance. However, one was not sure whether the credit flow would continue once these incentives were withdrawn. While the need for flexible rephasing and rehabilitation has been recognised by the author, NLRDF and Lok Bharati did not follow any precise system for safeguarding the interest of borrowers affected by floods and drought respectively.

The promotional activities, the flexibility in system, close follow-up, pursuing formalities to be observed by the bank, provision of access to new technology, etc., are some of the features of the NGOs studied by the GIAP. However, as noted by the author, the reported holistic and philanthropic concerns of the NGOs may create contradictions with the limited objectives of the bank.

The survey of voluntary organisations in Gujarat strengthens the hypothesis regarding ecology of voluntary action had lot of strength. Wherever market forces are weak, it could be hypothesised that the emergence of voluntary organisations would also have lesser possibility. Given this finding, the need for policy changes, with or without any intermediary organisation, as mentioned in the proposal of the project, cannot be disputed.²⁰

Summary of some of the policy changes, even though discovered earlier but found valid from the present case studies, is given next.

Key policy implications drawn from earlier work but revalidated partially or completely from present case studies are:

1. **Systems for Delivering Small Loans**—The average size of loans for priority sector is quite large compared to needs of the

very poor people (which range in hundreds as against the existing average which is in thousands). It is obvious that the cost of delivery as well as follow up will be enormous. Some of the alternatives are: (a) Promoting rural volunteers (on RVS basis of Canara bank, collection agent of Sewa, field assistants of SAF or a combination of these), who would form demand groups of poor so as to reduce transaction costs of the banks. Vikalp has done it very successfully with landless ban (rope) makers. (b) Linking saving and credit system so that both thrift and credit needs are met. In the national seminar organised by NABARD, the representative of GIC was advised to submit a note on fidelity insurance to NABARD as it²¹ might be useful to pursue the action. (c) Group loans, i.e., one loan to a group which should then disburse it to members as attempted partially by Grameen Bank (in case of development fund). Considerable attention will have to be paid towards forming groups. (d) Just the way government provides managerial subsidy to primary cooperative societies, subsidy to banks for such a purpose of servicing large number of small loans be provided. Government should modify IRDP policies so that indirect subsidies, as suggested here, substitute the direct subsidies (as being done at present with considerable inefficiency and wastage).

2. **Seasonality of Disbursement**--(a) Large number of activities are not only season bound but also season constrained (i.e., given fluctuation in environment, one activity may take precedence over another). The access of the poor engaged in these activities can be easily monitored by noticing the proportion of these activities in the credit portfolio of banks for the concerned period. (b) The viability of investments in such cases also depends upon timeliness of supply. The seasonality can also be used to restrict banks not to lend for certain activities in the non-optimal season.
3. **Flexible Repayment Schedule**--(a) Given different rates of return and unit costs in various ecological contexts for the same enterprise, the flexibility in repayment schedule is a must. NABARD should consider developing guidelines on the same basis as it has developed the land-holding limits for small farmer definition for the entire country. (b) Monitoring of coefficient of variation in the repayment schedule fixed by the banks (and not mean) would also provide feedback to NABARD about the extent to which eco-specific adaptations are being made in this regard.²²
4. **Innovative Instalment Collection System**--As mentioned at Sl.

No. 1, there is a considerable scope of improving and strengthening the recovery systems of bank. It has been shown in many studies that farmers and labourers often would like to pay in small bits but frequently. The cost of transportation and time many times may prevent such poor borrowers to come to bank for paying small instalments. NABARD should not delay innovations in this regard for at least pilot testing. Experience of SEWA as well as Farm Clinics confirms this.²³

5. **Portfolio Financing**--The basic idea is that if the difference between production/essential consumption needs is thin, if fungibility makes the task of monitoring of actual use difficult and if shuffling of enterprises over time and space is a necessary condition for risk adjustments by poor households, then method of estimating credit needs and monitoring its use will need to be modified. It may still be necessary to give loan for any one or two enterprises only but not consider reallocation of resources from one enterprise to another as misutilisation, as it is done today. The allocative efficiency not the enterprise efficiency, will be the touch-stone of appraising credit needs. The experience of SEWA exemplifies some aspects of this. It is like giving a general line of credit with necessary support to ensure that access of poor to other inputs or markets also improves. For goods, which are in scarce supply, tied line of credit has a merit. For other goods, general line may be better.
6. **Rescheduling and Rehabilitation**--(a) Banks are today constrained by the rules which provide for formal rescheduling only after gazette notification (which is generally made for the whole district and not for a part, in case of natural contingency). In some cases, officers do it informally by extending the date on the ledger itself (since formal rescheduling in the present system would require execution of documents afresh). The legal as well as procedural implications of this process need to be carefully looked into. One adverse effect of non-rescheduling is artificially high figure of overdues because even in the genuine cases the rescheduling has not been done.²⁴ (b) As far as rehabilitation is concerned, in cooperative system, the same has been tried for a long time. However, this relief is often non-discriminatory (as it was in case of Gujarat after Jaswant Singh Committee report). In commercial banks as well as RRBs, the same appears to be highly limited. In risk-prone ecologies, there is no escape from above mentioned implications.
7. **Contracting-Curative-Consulting Services**--Experience of case

studies pursued so far has revealed the need for back-up support to make economic investments viable without any exception. While it is difficult for banks to intervene as far as the political mobilisation is concerned, they can certainly contribute towards technological and economic reinforcement.

(a) Contracting implies engaging brokers who would either service the equipment of the borrowers or provide some assistance (marketing, procurement or follow-up of loan, etc.) and charge for the same. The logic is that organising these services individually by the borrowers may not be feasible, e.g., Sewa could mobilise legal support or health support, DSSS, NLRDF, LB and SAF could mobilise technological support.

(b) Curative Services deal with veterinary or plant protection services which either because of common property problems or scale of operations, technical knowledge, etc., cannot be organised by the borrowers on their own. The costs would, of course, be charged to the borrowers. Some of these services can be even obligatory. (c) Consulting Services imply using local skills for providing specialised services to improve efficiency of investments. Banks have already started entrepreneurship development programmes. It is quite logical that some of these trainees may need specialised help for market surveys, project development or other related aspects.

8. **Refinancing Farmers' Initial Investments**—It might shock some to learn that during a recent visit to Saharanpur, discussions with the Lead Bank (PNB) revealed that even for small medium-term loans, margin money ranging from 5 per cent to 15 per cent was being insisted by banks due to official instructions. In loans for wells, the problem often arises, where farmers take the initial risk by investing their own labour or hiring others. Banks often do not refinance these costs for which policy guidelines need to be issued.

REFERENCES

1. Also see, Anil K. Gupta, **Creating Demand Systems in Drought Prone Regions**, IIM, WP, 1986, PP. 649, and "Banking on the 'Unbankable' poor", draft for discussion in Second Workshop of IGPP, March, 1987.
2. NABARD has also undertaken a major research programme on Strengthening Credit Delivery System in Aurangabad, Hoshangabad and Sabarkantha districts.
3. See the details in IIM-WP 478, 1983, **Credit Arrangements for Drought Prone Regions: Policy Prescriptions and Planners' Reactions; and Management of Rural Credit and Support System: An Organisational Study of Financial Institutions in Drought Prone Regions** (Ph.D. Thesis), 1985, by the author.

4. See the case studies on SEWA Bank, IIM-A, Grameen Bank, Bangladesh. Profs. P.M. Shingi and S.P. Seetharaman have written the case on SEWA Bank, Prof. M.R. Dixit on Syndicate Agricultural Foundation and the Farm Clinic, Prof. T.V. Rao on Diviseema at IIM-A. Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar, GIAP, has written cases on NLRDF and Lok Bharati. IGSSS has prepared brief case profiles.
5. Recent visit to Vikalpa, a voluntary agency in Saharanpur's backward and least productive parts, provided very vivid example of this type. The hesitance of forest corporation to provide access to the poor to bhabar grass led to evolution of numerous intermediaries. Access to credit only saved the interest burden. The major issue identified was the access to common property resource for which group action was most necessary.
6. The transaction cost could arise when imperfections and inequity exist in information available with various parties in an exchange. The intermediaries may emerge to collect relevant information and process it in a manner that exchange becomes possible. The costs will have to be paid by parties.
7. See Anil K. Gupta, "Socio-Ecological Paradigm for Analysing Problems of Poor in Dry Regions", *Eco-Development News*, 1985, Vol. 32-22, pp. 68-74.
8. In an extremely backward pocket of Saharanpur district, Vikalpa-NGO organised landless ban(rope) makers to get their traditional grass cutting rights in the forest land. At the same time, it also organised Samitis of these workers to make them eligible for borrowing from bank through group action. The tension between the role of Samitis (the institution) and the morcha for regaining forest rights (the movement) poses a similar challenge before the activists (Vikalpa). The success of one impinges on success of the other.
9. The concept of loan committee also removes the arbitrariness from the process of scrutiny. The transition from case to law or concrete to abstract also becomes possible. Many progressive policies of SEWA Bank have come about in this manner. A decision has been taken recently to have such meetings every week.
10. The recommendation on portfolio financing made in the "policy options for drought prone areas" implied that bank should take into account all the major activities in which a household was gainfully employed while appraising its application. Even though loan may be given for any one activity, the transfer of resources from one to another, depending upon market conditions or resource position, should be encouraged and not discouraged to enhance the allocative efficiency of the household.
11. So far, the refree-wise ledgers of loan included only the overdue loans. In response to demand from loanees, SEWA Bank is considering the possibility of listing both regular and irregular loan accounts. This practice must be immediately started in all the rural banking.
12. See recommendation on innovative instalment collection system in "Policy Option". It is useful to remember that in the beginning, SEWA used to be provided a commission on advance and recovery. It is only later that the idea of bank had evolved.
13. Recent discussions have revealed that SEWA organised a massive relief to the member as well as non-member victims of the riots through the help from the State Government. The tools of the trade were provided whenever the same had been lost. Government

- and other organisations had provided cash relief also but SEWA dealt with mainly/only the in-kind relief. SEWA Bank had accepted the delay as inevitable but continued the follow-up so that the borrowers do not become apathetic towards their obligation towards banks whether the compounding of interest could have been avoided through development of simple rules that would find favour with cooperative department remains to be explored.
14. The SEWA trust or SEWA management may contribute matching grant or some token amount to each group of borrowers who pool such a risk fund. The management of such a fund should be entirely in the hands of the borrowers' committee. Legally, there is absolutely no bar to such contribution, given the fact that many banks like Syndicate and others have set up foundations (SAF) to which they contribute resources.
 15. NABARD may still consider the idea of studying Grameen Bank in Bangladesh by a team of professionals, including an academician, senior bankers, representatives of Ministry of Finance and NABARD.
 16. The Rural Voluntary Scheme of Canara Bank is a notable exception and deserves to be studied as a part of this project.
 17. A suggestion was made to NABARD in the meeting on April 29, 1987, that, while sanctioning various schemes, it must insist on appointment of contractual staff for intensive follow-up of the schemes at field level. It must also be recognised that given the low margins banks earn on such lending, they may not be enthused to hire permanent staff for the purpose.
 18. The hope that farm assistants recruited for five years would become developmental entrepreneur and be self-reliant has come true only in few cases. The whole idea needs further refinement and rigorous support.
 19. In both these cases, similar to the case of SAF/Farm clinics of Syndicate Bank, the emphasis was not on the poorest or even the poor. Typical Community Development approach was taken aiming at all-round development in a positive manner.
 20. Prof. Visaria did not agree with this inference from the data provided in GIAP case studies. There is a need for more rigorous analysis looking into the locations of office vis-a-vis the projects of NGOs so that the inference can be confirmed. In any case, the backward region do not abound in NGOs vis-a-vis the developed region.
 21. See the proceedings of the Seminar prepared by NABARD, included in IIM, WP, 478, 1983, on **Credit Arrangement for Drought Prone Regions: Policy Prescriptions and Planners Reaction**, .op.cit.
 22. See also Gupta & Shroff, "Learning to Unlearn", 1985, IIM-A.
 23. In a programme entitled, 'Focus', televised on May 3, 1987, op.cit. attended by the Additional Secretary, Banking and Secretary, Ministry of Programme Implementation and Review, collection of instalments from the door of the borrower was cited by most of the loanees interviewed as a definite advantage. However, all these examples were from urban areas. Government may be willing to consider innovations in this regard in backward rural areas also.
 24. In many cases of small genuine overdue loans, the interest burden thus becomes more than the principal. An interesting case was brought out by a very progressive banker where a small overdue loan of Rs. 120 could not be written off unless legal

suit was filed. The cost of the suit in such a case was about Rs. 240. If a borrower could not pay Rs. 120, how would he/she pay Rs. 360 plus other charges and compound interest even on the legal expenses debited to the borrower's account. Surely, RBI must look into such cases and simplify procedures for writing off such genuine loans of less than, say, Rs. 1,000.

Non-Governmental Organisations in Bangladesh : A Perspective

MOHAMMAD MOHABBAT KHAN AND
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AS IN many developing countries, voluntary efforts at the non-governmental level intended to improve the social and economic conditions of the under-privileged and disadvantaged sections of the population is not new in Bangladesh. Many individuals and organisations have been utilising their time, energy and resources in organising action-oriented participatory programmes designed to ameliorate the standard of living of the majority of the people, particularly of those inhabiting the vast rural landscape. These programmes have had significant influence on a variety of people encompassing diverse areas, like health, education, agriculture, fisheries, small industries, women, children, etc.

The phenomenal growth of voluntary organisations, also known as non-governmental organisations or NGOs, in Bangladesh can be traced to the relief operations in the aftermath of the devastating cyclone of late-1970 and the war of independence of 1971. In the early years of independence, their number was small; only a few with international connections were in operation. But in recent years, there has been a surge of private initiative in development. Today, there are over 10,000 licensed NGOs at work.¹ Most of them are small local organisations depending on scant resources. However, among them is an elite group which receives considerable funding from foreign sources. The number of such NGOs is 308 of which 27.6 per cent are non-local organisation and the remaining 72.4 per cent local.² These NGOs, as a rule, are registered with the External Resources Division of the Ministry of Finance and, therefore, permitted to receive continuous funding from outside the country.

While NGOs vary in terms of their size, objectives, resources and methods of operation, most of them, in one way or the other, play a significant role in the development process. Their impact and influence on society is clearly noticeable. Indeed, 10 per cent of the total population of the country come under the direct influence of the NGOs.³

MEANING AND TYPOLOGIES

The term NGO needs to be understood in the context it is used in this article. It can mean any type of organisation which is non-governmental in nature and having a specified set of objectives which distinguishes it from other forms of organisations. To us, it means a formal, non-profit, non-partisan private body which comes into being as a result of personal initiative of an individual or a group of individuals to voluntarily undertake developmental work at the grassroots. Generally speaking, it aims at bettering the lives of the rural poor. This definition of a NGO provides one with an idea of the type of persons needed in voluntary activities and the nature and scope of NGO operation.

An NGO personnel must manifest total commitment and dedication towards the disadvantaged sections of the population. He must possess the capacity and the spontaneity to face the rigours of community welfare work under trying circumstances. NGOs, to be effective, should involve themselves in the development process on the basis of the concept of participation. Participation is important in the process of modernisation. As one scholar argues, "the reshaping of (Third World) societies and the development of (their) rural areas can (not) be undertaken without the participation of the people, particularly the large numbers who are poor".⁴ Thus, the rural poor's participation in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of developmental projects must be ensured. And, in this context, the role of public agencies in development must be clarified and the extent of their jurisdiction clearly delineated so that public officials do not unwarrantedly trespass into the domain of the NGOs and impede their working. Of course, at the same time, the government should have some control over their operations. Thus, it is necessary to identify the linkages between the government and the NGOs. In a similar way, a distinction should be made between business organisation and NGOs. Non-profitism implies that NGOs are not typical business organisations where profit is intended for further enrichment of the owners of such organisation; rather any surplus resource, be it financial, technical or ideational, should be invested to better the lot of the rural poor.

In Bangladesh, attempts at classifying NGOs have been perfunctory. There is no agreement among scholars, action-researchers and NGO organisers as to what would form the basis of a classificatory schema. As a result, various approaches are noticeable in the classification of NGOs. One such approach takes a rather broad view and classifies NGOs into five categories using the sole criterion of "involvement in development activities". Consequently, interna-

tional, national, local and service NGOs are lumped together with donor agencies.⁵ Another approach utilising the criteria of objectives and methods of action produces three types of NGOs.⁶ Target-oriented NGOs are mainly interested in implementing economic programmes or to strengthen their receiving mechanisms by getting the poor together. Another type of NGOs are more involved in consciousness-raising and mobilising the poor. Some other NGOs base their activities on the idea of developing the community they choose to work with. One limitation of this approach is its exclusion of social welfare NGOs from the schema.

Another classificatory schema which is based on approaches and strategies of NGOs provides three categories.⁷ These are target group-oriented NGOs, community development-oriented NGOs and technical and service-oriented NGOs. The efforts, inputs and services of target group NGOs are primarily directed to benefit a particular segment of the population. Customarily, the target is the poor. The focus of the community development NGOs is the total community. Providing technical support and inputs are considered essential to increased productivity. Developing appropriate technologies for target groups form the core effort of technical and service NGOs. Even in this category, the problem of overlapping is easily discernible. NGOs, by their very nature, provide services. So it is erroneous to talk separately about service NGOs. Same is true to a large extent about technical NGOs. For any NGO, the motive in devising new and appropriate technology is that it is for the use of either a particular segment of the population or the community as a whole. It may be more useful to bank on a broad-based two-fold classificatory schema. The basis of such classification is objectives and functions of NGOs.

OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

The objectives of NGOs in Bangladesh are varied and so are their functions. One way of looking at NGOs is to attempt to place their objectives and functions into broad categories. Human development, socio-economic development and micro-social transformation of the society are three broad objectives which together cover the scope of activities of almost all NGOs in the country.⁸

Human Development--This is premised on a process of self-development by the rural poor. The role of outsiders, i.e., an NGO, is only that of a facilitator who assists and stimulates the target group to undertake job of self-investigation, self-criticism and introspection. This process is intended to encourage the rural poor to take

their own decisions and to review and evaluate such decisions when situation so demands.

Socio-Economic Development--It is believed that only with the eradication of economic inequities and social injustices can socio-economic development of the rural poor be achieved. From the economic standpoint, the goal is to raise income of the poor in order to bring about reasonable social security for them. NGOs pursuing this objective provide credit, technology and expertise to the rural poor.

Micro-Social Transformation--This significant objective is premised on the ingenuity and creativity of the rural masses to achieve self-reliance at the grassroots level. Self-determination as an inalienable right of the rural poor is considered sacred here. It is logically argued that self-reliance at the national level is totally contingent upon success in achieving self-reliance at the grassroots level.

Functions--The functions and activities of NGOs in Bangladesh can be grouped under four broad headings. These are employment and income generation, health and family planning, education, and organising the poor.

Employment and Income Generation (EIG)--Creation of employment opportunities and generation of income for the poor have been the major activities of NGOs in Bangladesh.⁹ The target of EIG activities has been landless labourers, poor rural women, small peasants and share-croppers, fishermen, destitute women and the like. EIG activities have been supported by credit, training and appropriate technology made available by NGOs to their respective clientele. The range of EIG activities has been varied depending on the objective and resource-base of particular NGOs. In the field of agriculture, for example, one clearly sees their impact. Agricultural research has been conducted on new improved crops and cropping system. Agricultural extension programmes have enabled the transmission of relevant knowledge to target groups. Use of appropriate technology, in the form of treadle pumps and bamboo tubewells, has enriched small-scale irrigation projects. Development of low-cost irrigation equipment for use of poor farmers along with facilitating control over irrigation equipments by landless groups in the villages have, to a certain extent, strengthened the position of the poor vis-a-vis the rich.

Another area, where NGO activities have had some success, is in creating job opportunities for poor rural women. The main

concentration here has been on handicrafts. Poor rural women have also been involved in other EIG activities like, sewing, rice husking, sericulture, agriculture, etc. One of the weak spots in this area has been in the marketing of products. In recent years, however, many NGOs have devoted considerable time and money to explore and develop necessary wholesale and retail outlets.

NGOs have also made significant strides in generating income and creating employment opportunities for rural landless men in such areas as cattle rearing, nursery preparation, agriculture and pisciculture. Rural para-professionals provide three essential services. They vaccinate livestock and poultry, make sanitary latrine slabs and work as mechanics fixing irrigation engines, hand tubewells and husking mills. All these activities not only enable the landless to earn their livelihood but also contribute towards economic prosperity and better hygiene for others.

It has been argued that EIG activities of NGOs have two lessons¹⁰ for us. First, it has been seen that the landless, if backed with appropriate training and the right type of credit, can increase their income by gaining access to important means of production. Second, it has been observed that increase of production and equitable distribution of income also result from such activities.

But a serious objection has been voiced as to the rates of interest NGOs charge on credits given to the rural poor to undertake EIG activities.¹¹ The commercial rate of interest (18 per cent) is charged by NGOs for credit they provide on the ground that the poor are accustomed in paying a still higher rate to rural money-lenders. But what is often forgotten is the very low rate of investment (25 per cent) in agriculture and agriculture-related activities in the rural economy. In the ultimate analysis, EIG activities will not go very far towards improving the condition of the rural poor if NGOs do not revise their present rate of interest on credit.

Health and Family Planning (HFP)--The health and family planning activities of NGOs have made notable contribution in providing services to the poor.¹² Such services include primary health care, immunisation, provision of essential drugs, health and nutritional education, preventive and curative health care, health education, contraceptive delivery, safe water supply and environmental sanitation, and diarrhoeal management.

The HFP activities of NGOs have made the rural poor aware about common diseases, their causes, prevention and treatment. Managing rural health has been based on providing health education, training of paramedics and supply of essential drugs, medical equipments and contraceptives. Motivation of both the poor and paramedics is seen

as a crucial variable in the success of HFP activities.

The success of NGOs in the HFP planning sector, especially in developing low-cost community self-managed health programmes, not only earned national and international acclaim but has also significantly influenced the contents of the National Health Policy.

Education--This is one area where most NGOs are engaged. Primary education for poor children, adult education and non-formal education for the poor have been undertaken to create awareness among the rural poor about their rights and obligations. In the process, the perception and consciousness level of not-so-knowledgeable people is considerably raised. Teaching materials are specifically developed to increase the functional literacy of the rural poor including women and children.

Protection of human rights of the rural poor are very much dependent on their being knowledgeable and informed about themselves and the surrounding environment. This is only possible through imparting education. From the NGO perspective, human rights of the poor, peace and development are all interrelated. As a result, NGOs provide legal aid services to the disadvantaged including women.¹³

In enhancing the level of education of the rural poor, the emphasis is mostly on relevant social leadership focusing on innovative methods for creation of new values and work ethics.

Organising the Poor--The most crucial role of NGOs in Bangladesh has been in the organisation of the poor.¹⁴ The objective is to enable effective participation of the poor in the development process. Consequently, promoting and sustaining organisation for the down-trodden sections of the population has been an abiding interest of NGOs. This has brought the formation of groups of individuals belonging to the same profession or are considered to be at the same economic level, i.e., landless, fishermen, weavers, rickshaw-pullers and destitute women. Participation of group members in every phase--planning, implementation and evaluation--of group activities is considered not only desirable but imperative for sustenance and propriety of the group. But, here, the role of highly motivated development workers in building awareness among the rural poor and making them conscientious for collective action is critical. Self-reliance is intimately related to the concept of participation. Reliance on one's own resources, initiative and strength not only minimises external intervention but also leads to group cohesion and solidarity. Participation and self-reliance salvage the poor from the doldrums and make them an effective force in society.

MAJOR ISSUES

Several key issues loom large on the horizon once an attempt is made to analyse the nature of the working of NGOs in Bangladesh. Three issues are of particular relevance. One concerns the ultimate objective, another deals with NGO-government relationship while a third relates to the source of NGO funding.

Empowering the Rural Poor

It has been shown by social scientists that solution of rural poverty does not lie with the creation of job opportunities and raising of income. Rather changes in the condition of the rural poor can only come through integrated approach in which they not only participate in the process but also dictate its outcome. This is only possible when the rural poor can unite and form meaningful associations at their own initiative and their own resources. The rural poor must be empowered to take those decisions which influence their daily lives. Only then significant transformation will take place in their way of living vis-a-vis others in the society.

It appears that though the number of NGOs keep on increasing only a few of them are working towards empowering the rural poor. Unfortunately, even the ones which concentrate on this particular aspect, tend to limit their attention to local issues of insignificant nature.

An analyst, looking at the role of NGOs in mobilising the landless, points out clearly the contradictions and duplicity of NGOs in this particular area. This is pertinent as mobilisation is in essential prerequisite to empowerment. He offers a number of rather persuasive arguments in support of his conclusions.¹⁵ First, the inability of NGOs to visualise mobilisation, primarily as a political process, and conscientisation as the methodology for developing the process. Second, NGOs consciousness raising sessions of target groups are of limited use as discussions therein are restricted to their immediate conditions of oppression and their capacities for counteracting them. But no discussion takes place about the nature and role of the state which authorises such oppression. Third, although the aim of conscientisation is to help the exploited to overcome their dependence on others, NGOs in effect, by providing credit and by making no plans to relinquish their financial involvement make their target groups increasingly dependent on them. Fourth, the practice of providing credit to individuals only lead to competition among individuals and creates division among them. Fifth, competition among NGOs for the same type of clientele has only resulted in discord among the poor.

NGO-Government Relation

The relationship between NGOs and the government in Bangladesh is beset with uncertainty, confusion and distrust. There are obvious reasons for such a state of affairs. NGOs want to be consulted by the government in the latter's developmental programmes. They would like to be free of all types of governmental regulations and control in their activities and operations. NGOs also feel that national plans and policies do not accurately reflect reality of power relationship between different classes in the rural areas.

On the other hand, the offer of partnership of NGOs in development is difficult for the government to accept. The question of legitimacy is important here. The government of a country like Bangladesh is legitimised either through institutional mechanisms, like elections or extra-democratic devices like *coup d'états*. Therefore, by allowing NGOs to become partners, presumably on the basis of equity, the government would be actually questioning the basis of its own legitimacy. Constitutionally, the government cannot go into partnership with any other body except other constitutional bodies and NGOs do not enjoy such a status. Secondly, rules and regulations are essential not only to regulate and delimit NGO activities, but also to bring them in line with national policies and priorities. No government can allow NGOs to work at cross purposes in the name of operational autonomy.

It has been pointed out that tensions between NGOs and the government results because of differences in values and ideology, differences in developmental priorities and differences in development approaches and strategies. Diagnosing the causes of tensions is a relatively easy exercise compared to the job of suggesting remedies. The basic differences in terms of role perceptions of both the parties, i.e., NGOs and the government cannot be removed, hence difficulties in the relation will continue. But some moves can be initiated to maintain a working relationship between the two. First, continuous interaction and dialogue between NGOs and the government needs to be maintained to iron out differences and each party's role in development. Here, the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) can play a vital role. ADAB is a coordinating organisation for national and foreign NGOs in the country. One objective of ADAB is to promote cooperation among NGOs as well as between them and the government. Second, governmental rules and regulations pertaining to NGOs can be simplified as well as made flexible so that normal activities of NGOs are not unduly hampered by the governmental agencies working in the rural areas. Third, NGOs efforts need to be viewed as complementary rather than as a substitute of governmental actions in improving the conditions of the rural

poor. Here, the responsibility lies with both the parties. The government needs to incorporate in its policies and programmes those ideas and tools developed by NGOs and applied with success in project area. Also, NGOs should try to realise that their role in development is only marginal; it is the government which has the main responsibility in the arena of development. A recent directive of the President of the country to create an NGO cell, under the control of a senior official in the Cabinet Affairs Division may foster a closer government-NGO relationship.

Funding of NGOs

One of the most sensitive issues in any discussion on NGOs concerns their funding. The questions usually revolve around their sources of funding, amount of funds and the nature of accountability on expenditures incurred.

NGO funds come from four sources: internal, grants and loans from international agencies, donations, and grants-in-aid.¹⁶ The internal source includes membership fees, interest on investments and endowments, fees for services provided and profits earned from every productive enterprise. Individual donations, beneficiaries' contributions and contributions of public and private organisations comprise the second source. Grants and loans from international donor agencies comprise another source. Finally, grants-in-aid are received in the form of grants and subsidies from the government and private organisations.

Though exact figures on financial resources of NGOs are not easily available, still a reliable source¹⁷ mentions that during 1982-83 NGOs spent US \$ 54.8 million in Bangladesh. CARE, a large international NGO, alone spent about US \$ 24.8 million. One well-known local NGO, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), received over a period of seven years (1972-79) an amount of over US \$ 1,855,367 from twelve foreign donor agencies.¹⁸

There have been occasions when knowledgeable and concerned people questioned not only the huge amount of money that many local and non-local NGOs received from outside the country but also how the money has actually been utilised. As a response to this concern, the government started taking definite measures beginning with the promulgation of the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance in 1978. This Ordinance was superseded four years later by the Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Ordinance. Finally, an Office Memorandum of January 1983 of the Ministry of Home Affairs, superseding all previous notifications on the subject, contained detailed procedures under which an NGO could obtain funds from external sources. The government's stand that regulation was intended to

bring NGO activities in line with national development policies had the support of the donor agencies.¹⁹

Another issue that has agitated the minds of people is how much NGOs spent on salaries and benefits paid to local and expatriate personnel serving in them as well as vehicles and other equipments compared to the amount actually spent on the target population--the poor. It is common knowledge that highly paid expatriate 'experts' are hired for consultancy work on behalf of a number of NGOs on a continuing basis though in many cases such expertise could well be provided by qualified locals at much lower costs.

CONCLUSION

The government of a developing country, however big with its tentacles stretched far and wide, is alone unable to look into every aspect of human life. The situation is much more difficult in Bangladesh because of its huge population largely living in the rural areas and struggling hard to meet basic needs. In spite of its best intents, the government is precluded from fulfilling the economic demands of the people, let alone social-psychological demands. This is where NGOs come into the picture; they can work to fill the void. NGO activities in the country are also in line with the present government's privatisation pursuits in other sectors of the economy. It is widely believed that development can be achieved to some extent through private initiative.

Nevertheless, NGOs cannot function in isolation from the main-streams of political, economic and social life in the country. They must conform to certain standards, adhere to governmental regulations and have their work coordinated at the governmental level. NGOs, however, complain about unwarranted bureaucratic intervention in their affairs. This is not wholly untrue and public agencies could do well in assisting NGOs instead of dictating. It is also somewhat true that a few NGOs have been found to pursue commercial activities with their owners/trustees pocketing a chunk of the profits. This is undesirable and the government can be rigid about it.

NGOs in Bangladesh have come to stay. They can play an effective role in the total development process. Their contribution is by no means insignificant. They have set in a new trend in nation-building and socio-economic progress of this impoverished nation.

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Role of Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGs) in Rural Development : Case Studies from Bangladesh

B.S. KHANNA

IT IS being increasingly realised by policy makers in many developing countries that people's participation in development processes needs to be promoted in order to accelerate the rural transformation aiming at substantial alleviation and ultimate elimination of the multi-dimensional and very hard syndrome of poverty afflicting a very large percentage of rural population. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of United Nations family has also been strongly pleading at the conferences and consultations convened by it from time to time in recent years that national policies and strategies for rural development should be guided by three main considerations to deal with the arduous problems of wiping out food deficits and improving nutrition as well as substantial alleviation of poverty. These inter-related considerations are high acceleration of economic growth, effective promotion of equity and genuine institutionalisation of people's participation (including the poor and women) in decision-making, and proper division of benefits of this growth.

ROLE OF VOLAGS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

As a result of this rethinking, indigenously and internationally, there is a visible trend towards reorientation of rural policies and restructuring of institutional arrangement in several countries. The progress achieved in the direction of these objectives of growth, equity and participation, however, varies very substantially at present from one country to the other, on account of differing nature of political direction, bureaucratic attitudes, social power structure, socio-cultural value system and availability of resources.

As regards people's participation in local decision-making, activities and sharing of benefits, requisite decentralisation of politico-administrative powers and resources from the Central or regional governments to local institutions is an obvious precondition. In order that local institutions exercise the powers and use the

resources properly with people's participation, the institutions would have to be recast and also reinforced by suitable additions. Even when these two changes are accomplished, it is quite often that the weaker sections of rural people do not find any adequate representation in the participatory process, as the rural elites push their way very strongly to dominate these institutions and thereby corner many of the benefits of development activities. In order to neutralise this domination the government agencies, media of communications (Press, especially political parties, interest groups and voluntary agencies have a role to play in creating development awareness and facilitating their strengthening of self-confidence and organised efforts among the poor).

In recent decades, the number and activities of VOLAGs have been on considerable increase in several Asian countries. In South Asia, their role in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka has been extensive and also meaningful, by and large, in contributing to the arduous national processes of development and welfare of the people. Not all VOLAGs are up to the mark in efficiency and sincerity in motivating and guiding the weak to improve their poor living standards and their indifferent participation in civic and development activities. Besides, there is as yet no coordination among them for mutual reinforcement of their activities for the benefit of the needy people. Moreover, relationship between several Volags on one side and governmental and private agencies on the other side is not always as harmonious and cooperative as are needed for enhancing the efficacy of voluntary activities for the benefit of the people. Initiatives and sustained efforts are needed to foster inter-Volag coordination and also cooperative relations with the governmental departments and private organisations.

As regards the study of the actual role of a few voluntary agencies in Bangladesh in motivating and organising the poor to participate effectively in the on-going development programmes as well as to take initiatives for starting 'self-help' schemes, individually or collectively, for betterment of their living standards and development of their endogenous faculties. Preparation of these studies along with several others was guided by this writer on behalf of the Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) in 1981-82. These were later discussed in the seminar held in each of these countries.

DEVELOPMENT PROFILE OF BANGLADESH

Bangladesh had a population of 98.4 million in 1984. The area of the country being only 144,000 sq. km., the density of population is

as high as 665 persons per Km. It is predominantly an agricultural country and nearly three-fourths of her population depends on agriculture for livelihood. Though the non-agricultural sector has made some headway in recent years, it is still small in terms of employment opportunities. The GNP per capita was as low as US \$ 110 in 1976 and \$ 140 in 1982. There are big socio-economic disparities between rural and urban areas as well as between the rural classes. According to two well known social scientists of the country, nearly 61 per cent of the population is living below the poverty line (1981-87). The FAO estimate of poverty is still higher. Though literacy has made headway in recent years, nearly three-fourths her population is still illiterate. The condition of rural women is even worse than men in terms of poverty and illiteracy. Infant mortality rate is as high as 13.3 per thousand and life expectancy is 50 years (1984).

Planned development with liberal foreign assistance has been undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh since 1973, after big disruption of her economy and society during the war of political independence waged by her people against Pakistan in 1971. She has completed two Five Year Plans since then and is in the midst of the third one. This has resulted in some socio-economic advancement but she has to go a long way in order to get out of the category of the Least Developed countries (World Bank categorisation).

VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN BANGLADESH

Many non-governmental organisations, both indigenous and foreign, have been making substantial contribution to alleviation of the very large syndrome of poverty and social backwardness. Among these organisations are a number of Volags, which are playing a significant role as complementary to the key governmental role in promoting development process among the poor. The number and activities of Volags have been on the increase in recent years.

Most of the Volags are small in size and depend on limited local resources. Several others have, however, been playing a larger and innovative role. While initially many of these were depending on assistance from foreign voluntary agencies, they are now tending increasingly to build and mobilise indigenous resources for their activities. Here, we would briefly review the organisational structure and functioning of five Volags which are among the well-reputed ones for their innovative and effective approach to the problem of organising and training the poor in villages to enable them to stand on their own legs. These Volags are: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK), Proshika, Nitena Kori

(NK), Shownivar Bangladesh (SB).

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)

Origin and Objectives

BRAC was established as a small voluntary agency in the Sulla Thana area (now sub-district) in Sylhet district. Initially it was concerned with contributing its mite to the national programme of government of the new state for relief and rehabilitation of multitudes of suffering refugees in the aftermath of country's successful war of independence waged against Pakistan in the second half of 1971. But very soon BRAC decided to switch its objective to motivating and organising rural poor constituting bulk of the rural population to become self-reliant and promoting cooperative efforts for raising themselves from the morass of multidimensional poverty syndrome.

Organisational Structure

There is a seven-member governing body to make policy decisions, to mobilise resources and to provide general direction to policy and programme implementation. It consists of an executive director, another top executive of BRAC and five persons well known for their developmental interest and activities. The executive director is responsible for administrative planning and management of programmes within the policy framework. Under him are four main administrative units: financial management, transport management, education and training, and project management. Below this level at the head-quarter are coordinators for functional education, training, health, and programmes respectively. There are area managers who guide and supervise field operations. Within an area, there are several camp offices, each office is manned by a number of programme organisers. Besides, there are paramedics to render medical aid and there are functional education teachers to impart education to people within a camp area.

BRAC's organisational structure extends now to an increasing number of villages in several districts.

Programmes

Promotion of Group Formation and Social Awareness—Though initially BRAC had tried to promote the community development programme, it soon gave it up as the poor were not much benefited by this programme. Instead, BRAC started promoting formation of groups of the poor. The groups undertake self-reliant collective activity after receiving functional education at the centres run by BRAC. A very useful functional education kit is supplied to every trainee. This

education raises their social and self awareness as well as provides skills, and training for productive activities. Besides men's groups, separate women's groups are also organised by BRAC. These groups organise and propagate the utility of group activity among poor people in other villages to encourage them to form similar groups. In this outreach process, they may seek the guidance of BRAC's field personnel, if need be.

Economic Programmes--Several small productive schemes are carried out by the various groups to improve economic status of their members. BRAC provides a part of the credit needed by them but mostly it facilitates the group members' access to the institutional credit available. Besides, formation of groups among wage workers has resulted in improving their bargaining power for better wages from the employers, who otherwise used to exploit them. BRAC also impresses upon the group members the utility of personal savings on regular basis to augment the capital needed for their productive schemes and for domestic consumption on special occasions--e.g., marriages, illnesses, etc.

Health Care Programme--Paramedics deployed by BRAC provide health education as well as simple medical aid and family planning advice to rural people. Village health workers have been trained by BRAC to take over elementary work of the paramedics to a large extent in course of time. Since water-borne diseases are common in rural areas, BRAC has been propagating oral rehydration therapy which comprises taking a mixture of gur (jaggery) salt and water. It has yielded very encouraging results.

BRAC's family planning programme has been gaining momentum, especially among those families whose members have underwent functional education courses and have also improved their incomes. This has indicated that improvement in social and economic status of a family tends to make it a willing acceptor of family planning practice in Bangladesh.

Funding

Initially, BRAC largely depended on grants received from foreign voluntary agencies, which felt concerned about widespread poverty syndrome in the country. Recently, however, BRAC has started several productive enterprises to augment its income and thereby reduce its funding from foreign sources. The major income yielding enterprises started are: (a) a large printing press; (b) a cold storage; and (c) several sales depots to sell the handcrafts made by functional groups.

Inter-relationships

BRAC has been helping several small Volags by providing training facilities to their workers. It has also provided its education kit to various agencies. While maintaining reasonably good relations with the government's agencies, it has, however, not compromised its autonomous status.

Comments

1. BRAC's leadership development programme has been a critical factor;
2. Its functional education programme has succeeded in stimulating minds and improving productive skills among the poor men and women;
3. Its use of paramedico and training of community health workers have made a distinct impact on health and family planning among the rural people of both the sexes; and
4. The outreach strategy promoted and encouraged by BRAC has tended to have a multiplier impact on organising groups of the rural poor for their own betterment.

Jonoshasthaya Kendra (GK) People's Health Centre

Origin and Objectives

GK was set up at Savar near Dhaka in 1972 through the cooperative efforts of a few medical professionals led by Choudary Zafarullah, an idealist, who felt very sensitive to the prevailing acutely miserable health conditions and also rapid population growth among the rural people. Initially, its primary objectives were to impart health education and to provide health care to villagers and to persuade them to accept the idea of family planning. Very soon, however, GK realised that economic condition of an individual is a very important factor in improvement of his health and in adopting positive attitude towards family planning. Moreover, the health condition and economic status of women needed special attention as they were in a more depressed state than men. Thus, training and motivation of the rural poor, in particular the women, to enable them to improve their incomes and education also became another primary objectives reinforcing the initial objective.

Organisational Structure

It is a registered trust with a board of 11 members responsible for policy-making and for providing general direction to policy implementation. The chief executive is the project director, who is assisted by an alternate project director and a project manager in formulating various programmes and directing their implementation.

There are several operating units under him: (a) hospital and health sub-centres; (b) pharmaceutical plant; (c) domiciliary health service; (d) education and publications; (e) agricultural farm; (f) workshop and craft centres; and (g) landless workers' organisation. The domiciliary health service and the landless workers organisation are village-based while the rest of the units are located on the GK campus at Savar and the health sub-centres are in the rural neighbourhood. Each unit is controlled by a manager with requisite qualifications. Staff meetings are held regularly, enabling the personnel of these units to pool their ideas and to have professional interactions to mutual benefit. These meetings also aim at fostering a spirit of collegueship among the personnel so that coordination among them is strengthened in the implementation of GK's programmes for providing health care and for improving highly depressed economic status of men and women in rural areas.

Programmes

Health and Medicare Programme--For providing promotive, preventive and curative health services to rural people, the main centre is the hospital at Savar with highly qualified personnel. Besides, for this purpose there are five health sub-centres with suitably qualified personnel. To the hospital and sub-centres are attached paramedics, who attend to ordinary health and family planning problems. The mobile domiciliary service also comprises doctors and paramedics to provide health advice and health care at the rural thresholds. The paramedics are ordinarily selected from among local men and women who show earnest desire to serve the local people. They are given an intensive training which lasts for 3 to 6 months. The syllabus includes basic knowledge of human anatomy and physiology, health education, simple medication and surgery, environmental hygiene, family planning, and rural development dynamics. A large number of women work as paramedics as this is not only useful for building rapport with rural women but also improves their own socio-economic status. Village health workers are also trained and get support for their community health activities both from paramedics and the health sub-centre doctors.

While no fee for medical treatment is charged from the very poor, others are charged fees on a differentiated basis according to their respective economic position. This not only results in mobilising a local resource for meeting some of the expenditure of GK but also counteracts any tendency for any wastages as well as growth of dependency complex among the rural people. A health insurance scheme was started on an experimental basis sometime back and is now being extended on demonstrating its utility.

On finding that market price of medicines had been fixed at a high level which was beyond the reach of the common person and that multinational and indigenous manufacturers had flooded the market with too many types of medicines, some of which were of not any or much use, GK started its own drug manufacturing plant. Essential medicines at reasonable prices are being made available to people. The government has recently formulated a drug policy, on GKs insistence in regard to the problem of drugs, aiming at counteracting exploitative practices of national and multinational drug manufacturers.

Economic Programme--Realising that the economic position of a person or family is a critical factor in improving his/their health and well being, GK has adopted a programme of promoting agricultural and allied occupational productivity. For this purpose, it has taken three main steps: maintenance of a large farm, for demonstrating improved techniques of production to farmers; deployment of paragros who, after intensive training on the farm diffuse knowledge of improved production techniques among the villagers, paramedics lending support to them in this connection; and the craft centres and the workshop provide training and support to the poor for undertaking schemes of small village industries.

Educational Programme--Recognising that social and self-awareness among the poor is a basic factor in improvement of their health and life-styles, GK has been promoting adult education and non-formal education programme. This is creating a ferment of new thinking among the people, most of the whom suffer from superstition and outdated beliefs and practices. A model school for children has been started to impart health education, and productive skills alongwith general education. Mid-day meals are provided to students to provide them nourishment. The school serves as a catalyst for other educational institutions in the neighbouring villages.

Funding

Though GK depended substantially on grants from foreign and international sources to meet its increasing expenditure, in recent years this dependence has been reduced. Its farm, pharmaceutical plant and workshops are yielding increasing income. The small fees charged by GK from well-to-do patients, as mentioned earlier, also contribute to its income to some extent. Several members of its well-qualified staff at the hospital and sub-centres are willing to accept only moderate salaries and honoraria on account of their concern for the poor. This helps to keep the expenditure down to some extent.

Relationships

GK has been providing facilities to other Volags in regard to training of their paramedics. It has also been helping several medical education institutions and hospitals in providing community health care orientation to their students and personnel respectively. It has good relations with the government to which it has been advising about drugs and health care problems.

Comments

Idealism among the professionals can result in their labour of love for enabling the poor persons to strive for improvement of their own lot.

The poor do not get much benefit through single sectoral programme; economic development needs to supplement health and education improvement programme to reinforced the approach to alleviation of poverty and social backwardness.

Deployment of paramedics and regular supply of basic medicines at very low price as well as training of community health workers provide a low cost and efficacious medical and health care service; moreover, a graduated system of fees should be preferred to no-fee from everyone to mobilise some funds as well as to prevent wastage of medicines by the patients.

Women should not be ignored in any health education programme and income-generating ventures as improvement of their health consciousness and economic status would not only be beneficial to them alone but would be beneficial to their children and even to their men folk.

Proshika

Origin and Objectives

Proshika signifies in Bengali language development education, training and action. It was set up as a voluntary agency in 1976, as the result of the inspiration and support provided by the Canadian University Overseas (CUSO). By now, however, it has become an independent indigenous agency, which aims at motivating and helping the poor to stand on their own legs.

Its specific objectives are to promote social and self-awareness among the poor as well as thinking among them about ways and means to overcome, individually or collectively, the environmental constraints on their progress; motivate the rural people to articulate their felt needs for better and more adequate community service by the governmental agencies; and provide skill and leadership training to the rural people besides training its own personnel.

Organisational Structure

It has set up a number of development centres; in 1982 about two and a half dozen such centres were at work. At each of these centres, training courses are held for its own field workers (Kormies) and for leaders of various functional groups formed under its inspiration. The training courses impart to the group leaders an in-depth understanding of social structure and constraints as well as of ways and means to be formulated for self-reliant strategies of development and for overcoming or else subduing these constraints. Besides skill training is imparted to these leaders and to selected members of groups to enable them to improve their productivity or else to start new income generating ventures.

Proshika's field workers are carefully selected after a period of six months' probation and training without salary when their attitudes and learning capacity are tested in terms of the organisation's programme of activities. They motivate the formation of functional groups of the poor and arrange for frequent inter-group meetings in their respective area of operation. A centre arrange a meeting of representatives of several groups at work within its area of jurisdiction. The work of various centres is coordinated by a higher level body.

Programmes

Proshika motivates and helps formation of functional groups of persons belonging to the same socio-economic stratum. A group selects its leaders to guide the groups social and productive activities. In 1982, there were about 4,500 groups in existence, each comprising landless or marginal farmer or unemployed. The group dynamics generate cooperative spirit and enterprising spirit among group members to a certain extent. Moreover, inter-group articulation and activities serve as a counter-poise to aggressive postures of the local elites.

Besides providing a skill training to group members, Proshika tries to facilitate group access to credit institutions for getting loans. In certain cases, it may itself provide a loan to a limited extent. The projects chosen by the groups are in the areas of agriculture, cattle breeding, handicrafts, agro-industries, minor irrigation, etc. The Ministry of Agriculture and Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation provide financial and technical support to several of these projects. This process is facilitated by Proshika.

Proshika is also encouraging and helping the local communities to articulate their needs for community services. It facilitates their access to concerned governmental agencies and provides feedback to the latter about adequacy of their ongoing projects. Thus, it

serves as a two-way communication channel between the communities and the governmental agencies. It has also been promoting access of communities to UNICEF for provision of drinking water facility in several villages.

It has also been generating social awareness for stoppage of environmental pollution and ecological imbalances caused by indiscriminate action of local people.

Comments

A close observer of Proshika's strategy remarked: "Inner dynamics of group formation, participatory decision-making process, the experience gained by group in project activities and, above all, beginning of generation of bottom-up planning are important facets of reaching the disadvantaged and involving them in the process of development".

One of the research studies undertaken in two of the villages covered by Proshika has clearly indicated that the group and inter-group activities in these villages have taken place without any dependence on support of the elites who have the habit of exploiting the weak.

While these results of Proshika's activities are commendable, its financial resources have been too limited to provide any substantial financial support to groups for their productive schemes. While its support for local community articulation and accessibility to governmental agencies concerned has been appreciated by the weaker sections of the community, functioning of productive groups promoted or motivated by it has, however, tended to arouse suspicion and even at times the animosity of existing elites. Unless inter-group organisations are built or strengthened, change in social power structure cannot be expected significantly in many of the villages.

Nizera Kori (NK)

Origin and Objectives

Nizera Kori (NK) means in Bengali language "we do to ourselves". It, thus, aims at promoting cooperative and self-reliant approach among the poor for their own betterment. It was started in 1974 as the result of the initiative of a Norwegian lady and her associates felt concerned about the miserable plight of the poor women. Its activities now, however, cover both women and men as it realised that unless the lot and attitudes of both the sexes improve simultaneously, women cannot ordinarily have the right environment for improvement of their highly depressed life, as aggressiveness of men is no less responsible for their condition. Starting its activities in a

few rural areas, it has extended these to many other areas in about twentyfour upazilas (sub-districts).

Organisational Structure and Strategy

For organising and conscientising the rural poor, NK has a body of whole-time workers, both males and females, hailing from rural areas. In 1982, these workers numbered 150. The recruits have to undergo initial training for about a week and are then to work with experienced workers in position for gaining practical experience. While some of the workers are entrusted with the responsibility of management and also fund-raising, others live and work with the groups in selected villages, thereby trying to win the confidence and goodwill of their members.

Separate primary homogenous groups are formed for men and women respectively. The group members are motivated and helped by workers to analyse their socio-economic environment with its constraints and opportunities; identify common problems of betterment of their own lot; and formulate common initiatives to deal with such problems. While NK does not have any adequate funds to advance any loans to these groups for their productive activities, it motivates them to practise the habit of saving so that the accumulated savings can provide part of the needed capital. Besides, it facilitates the access of group members to existing credit institutions for getting loans. By 1982, 1800 groups with over 50,000 members, one-fourth of which were women, was formed. Representatives of groups and the NK workers concerned in various villages in an upazila form an Upazila coordination committee in which 50 per cent of membership is required to represent primary women groups. The representatives from Upazila coordination committees form Inter-Upazila Division Committees. There were four such committees in 1982. At the apex level, there is a central coordination committee comprising of the chairperson from each division committee, one central organizer, one central co-ordinator, one central trainer and two women. Within each committee, specific duties are allocated to various members for management and training. Recruitment of workers and local policy decisions have been entrusted to each committee.

Programmes and Performance

NK's major programme is to impart two types of training: a five day basic orientation course for men and women separately; and an advanced three-day course for those having undergone initial training. The training courses were held at four main centres during 1982 in simple and low-cost buildings erected at these centres. The trainees are inspired to analyse critically their socio-economic

environment and also to discover their own capability for appropriate action to bring about self-improvement.

Mobile cultural teams are formed under the inspiration of NK to stage plays, puppet shows and music sessions to enliven the poor who otherwise tend to be diffident and even apathetic about their own condition.

Thanks to movation and training imparted by NK, group members increasingly became articulate about their needs for better wages, access to government land on lease for cultivation, equitable and honest distribution of food and wages under government sponsored Food for Work Programme (FWP), availability of adequate institutional credit, etc. They have also become openly critical of any corrupt practices of the bureaucracy and any oppressive acts of the existing social power elites. Besides, women groups take up issues regarding maltreatment of women by male family members as well as by any anti-social males. Close observers of these groups testify to growth of spirit of self-confidence, self-respect, mutual assistance and of increasing articulation among men and women belonging to these groups.

Relationships

NK is trying to forge cooperation with other like-minded voluntary agencies so that inter-agency pressures can be built up for promoting social justice measures for the benefit of the poor. Besides, such pressures are expected to expedite fair deal to be meted to women who otherwise enjoy an inferior social status.

Some Problems

NK has been facing two main problems: (a) women are not as yet stimulated to come forth adequately to form active groups in large numbers; (b) renewal of leadership is inadequate and the same leaders continue in position in many of the groups and committees.

NK is trying, however, to deal with these problems so that the groups do not become stereotyped and that the women are stimulated more effectively than hitherto for group activity. Its task, however, is not easy in a socially orthodox society.

Comments

A large number of poor women can improve not only when their involvement in government is ensured but also when attitudes of their men folk are reoriented to shed their superior sex complex.

Harmonious groups promote cooperative efforts among their members, thereby resulting in their mutual betterment.

Shawnivar Bangladesh (SB)**Origin and Objectives**

Shawnivar in Bengali language means self-reliance. The Shawnivar Bangladesh Movement started in September 1975, as the result of the initiatives taken by a number of social workers and government officials, led by Mahbub Alam Chashi. It aims at promoting the spirit of self-reliance among the people, most of whom are suffering from a complex of dependency due to their demoralising poverty, ignorance and exploitation as well as due to paternalistic attitude of the government agencies towards them over a long time. It seeks to promote its aim through motivating the people to make self-help efforts for optimum utilisation of available human and material resources. In the initiatives undertaken by the people, the government officials are expected to provide requisite assistance as partners, rather than as superiors. The local councillors (members of the union parishads) are also expected to act as partners, in Shawnivar drive for reduction of widespread poverty and ignorance and hunger from the local areas.

The movement has been receiving support from the Government since its beginning and even more so during the last five years. It has gained momentum after the initial years of trial and error during which adjustments between it, the local administration and local institutions (parishads and cooperatives) had to take place. By March 1984, the movement covered many rural areas in 157 out of the total 460 rural Upazilas. It is now beginning to take the form of a full-fledged organisation. Earlier, the movement was called Shawanivar Movement. But now it is officially known as Shawnivar Movement.

Features

The main features of the SB have been authoritatively stated as:

1. Promotion of consciousness among the rural people to make self-reliant, cooperative efforts for their own social and economic betterment, thereby contributing to national development in the new state. This is sought to be done through proper motivation and skill upgrading of community leaders and social activists as well as reorientation of officials; a manual for training has been prepared and training camps are held regularly for this purpose.
2. The social workers, with the help of local persons and officials, conduct village surveys to identify existing and potential human and material resources.

3. These workers and their helpmates then stimulate formation of functional groups, each group comprising either large and medium farmers, small and marginal farmers, or the landless, or the youth or the women; the group is expected to draw up its schemes for income generating purpose and for social improvement.
4. Each group is to send at least two representatives to form the village association which not only coordinates group activities but also formulates a broad plan for village development, for instance, food production, water supply, with any support it may like to seek from the local officials and the leaders of union parished (local government institution serving a number of villages).
5. There is a national Shownivar committee which coordinates, and guides the movement, with the support of the government. It has prepared a guide manual for the training of local leaders, social workers and officials respectively. The emphasis, however, is on flexibility of organisational set up at the local levels as well on mutual learning and motivation within it.

The SB has promoted various types of programmes among the people. The Economic Survey of 1984 issued by the Government has mentioned these briefly as:

1. At the instance of Shownivar, Bangladesh Bank has been providing credit through commercial banks and Bangladesh Krishi Bank to the rural landless people and marginal farmers without securities, to enable them to start or expand productive schemes. By March 1984, a total number of 1,82,025 persons had been given a loan of TK 16,37,72,344.0 and the rate of recovery was very encouraging--95.72 per cent. The loanees had developed a group fund by pooling their regular savings, the fund amounted to TK 1,48,72,748.0 for use by the loanees. Moreover, the functional groups of the loanees are willing recipients of development ideas and schemes. Mutual sense of cooperation and responsibility has grown among them. Habit of saving has been encouraged. Leadership among them has been emerging.
2. People in Shownivar areas have showed more willingness to become literate than those outside these areas. Besides, they are also more willing to accept family planning. The rate of population growth in these areas has been less than the national average. They are also less unwilling to change

their food habits so that local produce of foodgrains, even if wheat, is consumed by them. This has helped to relieve some pressure on rice stocks in a country of rice deficit.

3. In collaboration with the Directorate of Forestry, Shannivar has encouraged tree plantation programme to maintain ecological balance as well as to supply the much needed fuel wood to the rural people.
4. The rural people are encouraged and stimulated to adopt improved technologies for raising their productivity in agriculture and traditional occupations.

Comments

SB has been getting recently a good deal of government patronage according to some close observers. This has tended to impair its voluntary character to an extent. There is also a good deal of turnover among its social workers, as they are on the look out for regular and well paid jobs elsewhere. Even several of the functional groups formed under the movement seem to be losing cohesion and articulation. With the recent measure undertaken by the government to decentralise development functions of local character to the recently democratised Upazila Parishad, this would need a proper adjustment of Shannivar with the parishad. There is also an impression that the movement is not paying enough attention to problems of individual poverty and seems to be concerned largely with stimulating local efforts for food production and improvement of water supply.

Presently, these issues are being given consideration in the country so that SB could play an increasingly complementary role in the stupendous process of development in the country.

Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Nepal's Development Process

K.N. SHARMA

THE CONCEPT of planned development is of recent origin specially after the World War II. The concept of community development and rural development was popularised after the mid-1950s. The earlier concepts of development were based on the notion of free enterprise as manifest in the industrial revolution of Europe. The government was then construed to play the role of police and judge and the function of the State was to uphold the inviolable rights of its free citizens. This was challenged by the Marxist doctrine which pleaded for a complete manager's role for the State under the leadership of the working class. In practice, the government started having a more direct hand in the management of economic development both in the so-called free States and the communist States.

A major departure after the World War II is the increasing volume of international cooperation in programmes of national development. Bilateral help in the form of development assistance flowing from developed countries to the less developed or developing countries was one form of this cooperation. Multilateral agencies, particularly under the United Nations system, provided more universal type of cooperation. Both these types of development assistance followed certain models of development, where the government was a major partner in development planning. Each model talked about people's participation but the government occupied the key position as the mobiliser. Thus, the role of government increased considerably in matters of development.

Though the government started having a more direct role, yet it could not cope with the revolution of rising expectations. This caused the growth of voluntary agencies both in the national and the international settings. Some of such national voluntary agencies are purely indigenous, but some have been glued to international organisations and work as national chapters of such organisations. The

role of such voluntary organisations is now increasingly being recognised, both by national governments and international agencies. The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) held under the auspices of the FAO in July 1979, put its official stamp on the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in rural development.¹

DEFINITION OF NGO

The concept of NGO is of relatively recent origin, but the origin of non-governmental action is probably even older than the governmental action for social welfare and development. The primary motivation for social service seems to have been religious sentiments, where the helper or giver feels an obligation to help the needy. This is the reason why charity has been the first field of non-governmental action. The starting point is the individual. Gradually it starts getting organised and religious organisations undertake social service on a wider scale. Resources are generated to support social action through charity and donation in the form of trust or endowments. This is the origin of NGOs.

The definition of NGO is fraught with a series of difficulties. Firstly, government has also started functioning in areas that were first the domain of social NGOs. Secondly, the government has also conceived a role of partnership or sharing with the people insofar as it promotes social action for development. Thirdly, there is usually a strong government support in NGO programmes. Fourthly, many NGOs are sponsored by the government. Fifthly, the government may ban NGOs if found not conducive to its stated goals. Sixthly, NGOs might have political motivation under social garb, and therefore, may not be given a legal status by the government.

In Nepal, no formal definition of NGO seems to have been made by the government. The National Level Social Workers' Seminar held in the Panchayat Development Training Centre, Janakpur, tried to define social action in the following manner:²

We can call as social service all welfare actions that are inspired by and directed to the attainment of the national aspirations for the creation of the dynamic, exploitation free welfare society. In this way, social service is to direct and inspire the Nepali people individually, community-wise and collectively towards clearly stated national goals and to execute humanitarian actions systematically or incidentally, in accordance with the

stated national aspirations.

A case study conducted by ECAFE (now ESCAP) in 1970 came up with two concepts of social welfare: Residual (individual), and Institutional. Of these two concepts, the institutional still holds valid and is quoted here:³

Institutional social welfare is the organized systems of social services and institutions designed to aid the individuals and groups to attain satisfying standards of life and health. It aims at personal and social relationships which permit individuals the fullest development of their capabilities and the promotion of their well-being in harmony with the needs of the community.

About the voluntary agencies the case study gave the following definition:⁴

A voluntary welfare agency is a group of persons who have organized themselves as a legal corporate body to render social services through organized programmes.

For operational purposes, NGOs are non-governmental institutions in the sense that they are not an intrinsic part of bureaucracy. But they may be sponsored and heavily supported by the government. NGOs are also completely run without the financial or other material support from the government. They may not be sponsored by the government but they should be rendering services and assistance to society in areas and manners that are within the purview of stated national goals. Institutions that are purported to serve causes that the government is hostile to are not considered NGOs for the sake of this article because though the social cause is a justification yet the final legitimiser is the government. In this sense, all NGOs should either be registered institutions or be eligible for registration within the given legal frame.

GENERAL IMPORTANCE OF THE NGO SECTOR

In the recent past, all developing countries have pursued policies of development with strong economic tilt. But the success has not always been satisfactory. A hindsight shows that, firstly, the development is not economic alone and secondly, socio-political growth is a precondition for economic growth. The people should control the

economy and not merely derive benefit from it. A policy paper of ECAFE made the following remark in 1971.⁵

The spectacular failure of many development programmes with an exclusively economic bias has given rise to a growing awareness that economic and other aspects of growth cannot be treated as separate and even mutually competing elements but that economic growth is just one aspect of a total process of change in which political, social and ideological aspects are inextricably interrelated.

The Indian Rural Reconstruction Movement speaks of four enemies of the people: poverty, illiteracy, ill health and inertia.⁶ That holds true not only for India but for all the countries of the region with similar socio-economic background. To fight these big enemies is a big battle, the government is the main fighter, the lieutenant, but not the whole army. Unless the entire people are mobilised, the battle will not be won. And to mobilise the people, they should be approached: creating their institutions, their leaders and their strategies. Macro-development goals are frustrating if they are not supported by micro-strategies.

The main problem is the resource constraint, which could be tackled by generating local resources. This calls for local level planning and the participation of local people. This requires recognised institutions of the people where people make decisions. This is not always achieved by the government. The other issues of development--leadership, technical skill, management skill, favourable attitude of the people, favourable social environment--are not less important. Non-productive but essential services are to be always rendered to society. Occasional calamities also call for special help and services. In the face of the multitude of such demands, the government is not an adequate supplier.

According to John Ward, the objectives and functions generally ascribed to the voluntary movement relate to:

1. balancing needs and resources in the community/society;
2. improving or increasing services;
3. developing knowledge, skill and confidence; and
4. making democracy work.⁷

The last may not always be the stated objective of any NGO, but in the micro situation of the institution, the practice facilitates the art of democracy.

GROWTH AND TRENDS OF NGO IN NEPAL

Historically, the period ending in 1951 is regarded as a dark period in Nepal because the 104 years of a family rule not only exploited the power and resources but closed all doors for development. The government also functioned only as a revenue raiser and arbiter of disputes. No major development programmes were launched and no people's organisations were permitted. The only social organisations that were allowed to function were the religious trusts created to run various temples that were abundant. Only one trust, inspired by Gandhian movement in India, was opened in 1926 by the name of "Nepal Gandhi Memorial Charkha (spinning wheel) Propagation Trust". The other charitable trust 'Paropakar' was started in 1947.

The year 1950 was a transitional period and in 1951 the family rule gave way to a modern democratic era. In the field of social activities also, institutions appeared with various objectives and services. A great landmark was created when an Act was passed in 1977 which provided for creation of a Social Services National Coordination Council (SSNCC) and six coordination committees. This Council started functioning under the chairmanship of Her Majesty Queen Aishwarya Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah. The preamble of this Act states the following rationale for this law:

1. to avoid duplication and maintain coordination among various societies;
2. to maintain maximum possible uniformity in national, foreign and international donations/grants, and to formulate national policies and programmes;
3. to mobilise and direct the efforts of social welfare agencies in a coordinated way towards programmes of national development;
4. to maintain harmonious relations and good understanding among people and communities of different orientations; and
5. to promote the interest and welfare of children, youth, old-age people, women and handicapped people.

The above preamble indicates the policy of HMG towards NGOs. The main thrust seems to be the maximisation of services rendered by different agencies for which the SSNCC acts as policy formulator and coordinator. Considerable amount of money is made available through international agencies for health and humanitarian services. The government also makes generous grants, local people also raise

sizable resources. The main attitude of the government is to see to it that all these resources are channelled to priorities set for national development. This responsibility is given to the SSNCC.

The attitude of the government has been one of facilitator and promoter as a result of which the number and area of NGO activities are increasing. As the last point in the preamble of the SSNCC indicates, the government wants the NGOs to share with the government in the task of nation building.

Performance of the NGO Sector

The history of spontaneous, charitable voluntary action is much older than the government initiative for socio-economic welfare of the people. But although the organised government sector for development started only during the early 70s, the momentum and quantum of growth of this sector was much faster than that of the NGO sector. However, after the formation of the SSNCC, this sector is also catching up very fast. Under the SSNCC, six coordination committees have been created at the national level dealing with services for children, women, youth, health and handicapped people, communities, and Hindu religion, voluntary agencies providing services in these areas are affiliated to the relevant coordination committees. Thus, several possible related voluntary agencies are coordinated by the coordination committee concerned. These coordination committees are, in turn, coordinated by the SSNCC.

The emergence of SSNCC as the apex body has been a morale booster to the NGOs. Thus, by 1985, there were over 370 NGOs working at the national and local levels.⁸ The traditional style of concentrating services around urban centres has considerably changed and many local agencies are, in fact, created exclusively at the village level. The quantum of services and assistance has also increased substantively. Table 1 shows the pattern of growth in the financial position of SSNCC and the different coordination committees during the period 1977-85; the figures are inclusive of all internal resources, external (foreign) assistance and government grant-in-aid.⁹

The figures in Table 1 indicate that there has been a consistent increase in the financial position of the NGO sector after the creation of SSNCC in 1977 and that in the last eight years mobilisation of internal resources has gone up by over 400 per cent, external assistance has gone up by 1,000 per cent and government grant has increased by over 400 per cent. The overall resource position has increased by almost 600 per cent. The quantum of services provided by these agencies has, therefore, also increased proportionately.

Table 1 BUDGET POSITION OF THE NGO UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS

(Rupees in Thousand)

Fiscal Year	Internal Resources	External Aid	Government Grant	Total
1977-78	4,519	6,020	3,713	1,42,052
1978-79	7,420	14,985	6,253	28,658
1979-80	12,395	19,747	3,950	38,092
1980-81	11,745	31,590	9,799	53,134
1981-82	8,035	43,038	9,480	60,553
1982-83	11,421	63,994	13,400	88,815
1983-84	19,189	65,948	14,009	99,146
1984-85	19,385	60,244	15,400	95,029

However, despite this reassuring increase in the total NGO capability, the quantum of services in the NGO sector is still only a trifle compared to the services provided the government sector. Nevertheless, recognition of the NGO sector is a positive trend and their tremendous potential to mobilise physical, financial and human resources has created a sense of confidence in the public mind with still higher expectations in the future.

Future Prospects for the NGO Sector

According to the wishes and directions of His Majesty King Birendra, the government has prepared an action plan with a view to providing basic services to all the Nepalese people by year 2000 A.D. In a country with only about 30 per cent literacy, very little modernisation and industrialisation and very little physical infrastructure, this call is a daunting challenge which cannot be met by the government alone. In fact, only a very high participation of the private sector and the general public can give some credence to this proposition. The NGO sector can do a lot to fill this gap.

The Member-Secretar of SSNCC, Shri Kali Prasad Rajal, outlines the following activities for the NGO sector:¹⁰

1. welfare activities;
2. construction work;
3. educational activities;
4. community development;

5. health related activities;
6. income generating activities; and
7. local development type activities.

Pointing to the Government-NGO relationship, he says that "it is not a matter of GO vs NGOs... both of them are not substituting each other (but) they are complementary to each other. Hence it is preferable to develop a method, strategy and working relationship where both GO and NGOs can make their best performance and serve the people at large.¹¹

The creation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is a positive indication that the government wants to expand the role of the social sector. For this purpose, the contribution of NGOs is as much important as, if not more than, that of the government. Furthermore, the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development has been emphasising on participation of people in the process of development. A special wing for development of women has been created. All this is a good start. If these are further strengthened by mutual effort, there will be much wider participation of NGOs in the national development process.

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Rural Development and NGOs in Pakistan

M. SADIQ MALIK

PAKISTAN ENFOLDS the famous land of Indus valley civilisation and is blessed with an ideal climate and a vast alluvial plain along a net of river system capable of stimulating the highest level of agricultural production. The economy of the country in conformity with its natural infrastructure is predominantly agrarian. Agriculture directly or indirectly provides livelihood to about 70 per cent of the country's population and also provides raw materials for the country's major industries, viz., textile, sugar, etc.

Pakistan's main problem of poverty is concentrated in its 45,000 villages. Its real challenge of development also lies in the rural sector. About 35 per cent of the rural population is living below subsistence level. Social services are extremely inadequate. The absence of facilities even for primary education and basic health cover, etc., result in denial of opportunities to a large segment of the rural population in their effort to improve their productivity. The problem itself is not new. What is new is: the growing understanding about the ways in which inadequacy of production inputs, lack of appropriate technology, high birth rate, inequality of job opportunities and a deficient rural institutional system interact to generate and perpetuate poverty.

Pakistan is primarily the land of small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, tenants, share-croppers, women and youth who form more than 75 per cent of the rural population. This target group is confronted with host of problems, such as uneconomic and fragmented holdings, illiteracy, ill-health, poor communications, ineffective cooperatives, no holding and repayment capacity, unemployment, lack of skills and supporting institutions.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development does not mean mere agricultural growth. In rural development, all aspects of rural life are inter-related and no

lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects are dealt with in isolation. Therefore, rural development should combine the objectives of growth, employment and income redistribution through suitable institutions, which would allow benefits of modern technology to reach the weakest section of the rural population. So rural development strategy should aim at increasing the income of the majority of rural population by providing better facilities.

In Pakistan, a number of rural development programmes have been formulated and implemented to increase agricultural production and productivity, to create job opportunities and to improve social and physical infrastructure in rural areas. Unfortunately, the most important element which seems to have been overlooked, is the human development. The rural uplift programmes include, the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development (Village-AID) Programme, Basic Democracies System, Rural Works Programme and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). While a detailed evaluation of these programmes is not possible to be elaborated here, it would not be incorrect to say that some of these were not a complete failure. However, by and large, the beneficiaries were influential big farmers, who had access to the source of power and patronage. The rural poor (target group), which forms the vast majority, were almost by-passed.

Village Development

This programme was launched in 1953 and was meant to raise the productive output and real income of the villagers by providing them the technique of farming, cottage industries, sanitation and health, etc., and by expanding the social and physical infrastructure in the rural areas. It was organised around a development area (Block) that comprised 150 to 200 villages with a population of about 1,00,000. Responsibility for imparting technical education to the rural residents on agriculture, health, communication, etc., fell on a village worker who was given one year of training on these disciplines.

One village worker was arranged to each group of five to seven villages. The village worker, supported by a group of specialists, performed his development role through the council of selected elders representing various interest groups in a village and created to involve people in decision-making processes. These Councils were created to provide a link between villagers and the multipurposes extension agent, i.e., Village AID worker. The village workers had their major assignment to motivate and organise villagers for initiating, planning and implementing development work. With their assistance, the Council of Elders used to formulate local development projects and determine outside assistance required for implementation

of projects.

In order to qualify for government grant, the villagers were required to contribute roughly 50 per cent of the cost of project in labour, cash or material. Once approved by the Development Area Advisory Committee, the responsibility for implementing the village's contribution to the project lay with the Council of Elders.

Independent Area Advisory Committee, constituted under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner and chairman of the Council of Elders as its member, was charged with promotion of field coordination among representatives of various departments. These ad hoc councils, however, failed to mobilise the villagers because they lacked roots in the people.

Basic Democracies System

After the military coup in October 1958, a new model of local government was introduced to have direct participation of the people managing their own affairs through representative bodies not far removed from their own village. A four-tier system of local self-government replaced whatever little remained of Panchayat and Village AID system. The lowest tier of the Basic Democracies system, called Union Council, had population level from 8,000 to 14,000 and was typically composed of three to four villages with about 10 councillors. Each councillor had a constituency of about 1,000 and was elected directly by the people on the basis of one-man-one-vote. The elected councillors, in turn, elected chairman who was the executive head of the Union Council. These councils were given judicial and usual public service functions, in addition to their development functions.

At the next level was the Tehsil (sub-district of about 25 Union Councils) Council, consisting of all the chairmen of the constituent union councils and tehsil level officials of various government departments. The sub-divisional officer functioned as the chairman of the Tehsil Council and, in this capacity, coordinated the working of the line departments.

The third and the most important tier of the Basic Democracies was the District Council which consisted of chairmen of Tehsil Councils and district level officers of the development departments. The Deputy Commissioner was the chairman of the District Council and an elected representative worked as the vice chairman.

The highest tier was the Divisional Council that functioned under the chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner. The Council also consisted of official and non-official members

During the Basic Democracies period, local development projects were initiated by the Union Councils and then sent up to the Tehsil

Council, which, after scrutiny, forwarded these to the District Council for approval.

To accelerate the pace of development work initiated from the grassroots level, Rural Works Programme (RWP), largely funded by the counterpart local currency resources, generated through the sale of foodgrains shipments under the PL-480 assistance to Pakistan, was launched in September, 1963. The RWP laid emphasis on development of social and physical infrastructure in the rural areas and that way created additional employment for the rural masses. For implementation, a completely decentralised system of administration was adopted. The Deputy Commissioners were appointed Project Directors for their districts and funds were directly released to them.

Subsequently, management of RWP was handed over to local government institutions and Special Rural Works Programme Committees were created at all levels of the Basic Democracies. Of the total district allocations, 75 per cent was spent by Union Councils on schemes suggested and planned by them while 25 per cent was placed at the disposal of the District Councils for executing bigger projects under their own supervision.

While the Union Councils were gaining more experience in planning and implementation of development projects, political changes in the country during the late sixties pushed these institutions into the background. Initially, it was decided to divorce the Basic Democracies from their political functions and redesignate them as the local councils freeing them from undue bureaucratic control. But the events of the 1970 and 1971 in Pakistan resulted in winding up of the system of Basic Democracies.

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

After abolition of the Basic Democracies system, the IRDP was launched in July, 1972. The new approach to rural development envisaged to bring about necessary structural changes to integrate various components of the development programme by pooling resources and activities of various nation-building agencies, both public and private. It also contemplated to involve farmers actively in the development process through farmers' own associations at the village and the project level. Under the new approach, critical farm inputs together with credit facilities, extension and related services were to be placed in an integrated and package form, in a favourable locational matrix. This was expected to enable the farmers in the surrounding area to assimilate new farm innovations and practices and also to facilitate institutionalising of the agricultural transformation that was underway. In addition, the project centres--"Markaz"--that were eventually to turn into rural towns or the so-called

'agrovilles', besides serving as the growth centres, were to generate employment opportunities for the non-farming rural populace.

Pakistan's Concept of IRDP

Setting up of institutions required for agricultural development is essentially the first step in integrated rural development. The organisational structure, as a foundation, has to be linked with the civil administration and the local bodies system at all levels to ensure that agricultural development is closely linked with the overall efforts towards rural development, including other important sectors, e.g., health, education, community development, communications, etc.

With the above mentioned considerations in view, the concept underlying the Markaz, based on SHADAB pilot project, is as follows:

To select a production area comprising 50 to 60 villages with a view to improving the socio-economic status of the target-group through intensive rural development programme. The initial thrust shall be on increased agricultural production and productivity by intensification, diversification and commercialisation of agriculture based on sound physical, organisational and institutional infrastructure. This will require upgrading of skills through appropriate technology, provision of supervised credit, inputs, machinery, tools, storage, marketing, health, education, etc., as a package deal from a focal point.

Each Markaz was designed to serve, on an average 50-60 villages stretching over an area of 200-300 square miles. All the nation-building agencies, to be represented in the Markaz, were to redirect their staff in such a manner that the scope of their work conformed to the jurisdiction of the project areas. The executive head of each project was, invariably, to be an officer with sound understanding of the rural environs and problems.

A two-tier system was created, one at the village level and the other at the Markaz with a specific purpose of involving the rural community in the process of development. The main task of the village level organisation was to mobilise and organise the people for identification of development needs, formulation of action plans, development of local resources and the ultimate self-management of various development projects.

The IRDP remained on ground for more than 10 years. During this period, it passed through three distinct phases. The first phase, from 1972 to 1977, can be regarded as the most important in the short history of this programme. During this phase, about 135 Markaz were

established in the four provinces of Pakistan. It was given high publicity by the government in power which extended special patronage, partly real and partly rhetorical, and efforts were made to integrate it into the provincial and national planning apparatus through establishment of Provincial Rural Development Boards (headed by the Chief Ministers) and the National Rural Development Council (under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister). However, the crucial link with the rural masses through the institutions of local self-government was denied to the programme. Although the authority that approved IRDP scheme clearly stipulated installing of local government at the Markaz level, elections to local bodies were kept pending on account of political expediencies. In the absence of truly elected bodies, IRDP had to rely on ad hoc local groups constituted as multipurpose cooperative societies. While the main emphasis of IRDP during this phase remained on improving agricultural productivity through the provision of modern farm inputs in a package form, supplemented with technical advice and credit support, civil works, such as road construction, school buildings, small irrigation dams, and drinking water facilities were carried out through the Rural Works Programme. This programme, after 1972, operated under a new nomenclature, i.e., People's Works Programme (PWP) but its planning and implementation remained with the provincial governments.

IRDP during the Post-1977 Period

During the post-1977 period, the IRDP passed through two distinct phases. In the first phase, which began with the change in government in July 1977 and continued through the end of 1979, the programme experienced some inactivity and remained in operation without a political umbrella at the provincial and federal levels and without any effective institutional linkage with the rural community.

The second phase began with the installation of local government bodies in January, 1980. The tier of the Union Council, that existed during the Basic Democracies period, has again been reactivated. This tier is now managed by the "elected representatives of the people" known as Councillors. Initially, a Councillor, senior in age, was appointed as the Chairman of the Union Council, who in this capacity, used to sit on the Markaz Council. Now chairman of a Union Council is elected by the Councillors from among themselves. All the Chairmen of the Union Councils falling in the territory covered by the Markaz, the Project Manager, the representatives of various governments/agencies posted at the Markaz, and a District Councillor from that area, constitute the Markaz Council. The Chairman of the Markaz Council is also elected out of non-official members of the Markaz Council. The Project Manager works as Secretary of Markaz

Council. Above Markaz level, there is now a District Council with an elected chairman. The District Council is composed of all the District Councillors and the district level representatives of the nation-building departments. The Deputy Commissioner is no more in charge of the District Council. The elected chairman of the District Council is also the Project Director of the Rural Works Programme.

Markaz is not a tier of the local government. It has been incorporated into the local government set-up through an executive order; the Markaz Council otherwise has no constitutional standing or recognition under the Local Government Ordinance of 1979. At the Union Council level, the Provincial Department of Local Government and Rural Development is represented by the Secretary, Union Council. The Secretary, Union Council is responsible for maintaining record of the Council and for assisting the Chairman of the Union Council in the discharge of his duties relating to development work in the area.

Both the Union Councils and the District Councils have been assigned judicial, administrative and developmental functions and are vested with powers to levy taxes and fees in order to enjoy some degree of independence in terms of financial matters. Funds earmarked for rural development work in annual development programme of the provinces are transferred to the District Councils which, in turn, distribute these among the constituent Union Councils through the Markaz Councils. Development schemes prepared by the Union Councils are submitted to the Markaz Council which after thorough scrutiny send these over to the District Council. The District Council has the final authority to approve or disapprove a scheme submitted by the Union Councils.

After experimenting various Rural Development Programmes in the past 39 years, it has been established that no meaningful development in rural sector is possible without removing some serious constraints and bottlenecks which have all along hampered successful implementation of these programmes. These may be political, administrative, financial, cultural, social, economic or technical in nature.

Political Commitment

Political commitment on the part of the government has no value unless government is serious to translate it into action. If the ultimate aim is to take the benefits of economic development to the less well-off sections of rural society, the existing rural power structure which, in large measure, is the outcome of differentiated agrarian setting of the country, will have to be properly transformed. Failing which, the benefits will continue to be reaped by the local elites. The power structure at the grassroots level should give equal opportunities to people to participate in development

activities according to their felt needs under a decentralised administrative system.

Administrative System

The present colonial type administrative hierarchy is not development oriented. There is a need for drastic changes right down the line to the villages so that development impulses spread to the hinterland without any impediments. The lowest administrative level at which some supplies and services for development are available is tehsil/sub-district. This is beyond the reach of rural poor.

Infrastructure

It is imperative that adequate physical and social infrastructure is provided on priority basis. This includes feeder roads, electricity, drinking water, health and education facilities. It is necessary to ensure easy and effective delivery of supplies and services, particularly to the weakest section of the community. It is observed that electrification, improvement of communications, and transfer of small farm technology has encouraged small scale rural industries.

Local Level Planning

National or macro indicators cannot help in forming a clear and coherent picture of development process without moving down to a level where socio-economic factors interact to create the desired impact on rural poor. A major deficiency of national planning has been the failure on the part of the planners to obtain adequate and accurate data or information as to what actually is happening outside the capital city, who are the beneficiaries, and what are the aspirations and needs of the people in villages. National objectives and targets have regional aspects and that regional aspects are largely reflection of local needs and aspirations. It is, therefore, the local micro-level which determines the realism in the development process.

The closer the planning exercise is to a particular area or locality, the more realistic and specific it becomes in its contents. A better idea can be formed of the local resources, that can be mobilised for project implementation, and programmes can be modified to meet the actual needs of the local people and the special virtue of micro planning approach is the opportunity it affords to the people for involving themselves meaningfully in decision making and decentralised development process.

The paternalistic approach assumes that rural people are passive fatalistic, uninterested in improvement of their lives, and incapable of initiative. On the other hand, populist approach assumes that

rural people are vitally interested in change and can transform their communities, if they are left alone. Both approaches are fallacious because rural people are neither as inert and ignorant, nor as virtuous and wise.

Markaz approach is based on a sound concept. If properly implemented, it has potentials to achieve the objectives of decentralised planning and implementation of rural development programmes. This is only possible, if Markaz is declared a tier of local bodies and a sub-regional planning and development unit and provided with necessary technical and planning staff and financial resources. Even this change is likely to be only partially effective if the present system of 'top down' and centralised planning is allowed to continue. Area-wise plans prepared by Markaz can be meaningful if these are coordinated into district, provincial and national plans under a 'bottom up' planning process.

At present, only Union Councils and District Councils are recognised; the Markaz has not been given a statutory standing. Moreover, neither the Project Manager nor Markaz Council has any control over the departmental functionaries assigned to the Markaz. It is true that Union Council as a unit of local government and development have existed in the past. But that should not be the only criterion to reinstitute this tier, particularly for the performance of developmental functions. Realistically, Markaz is the appropriate point that has threshold population and resource base to support and sustain important commercial, industrial and other development activities. This is a territorial unit that provides economic rationale for posting of developmental functionaries, with necessary skills and some decision-making authority. This is the point that can be transformed into an effective growth centre.

In Pakistan, there is already a move to subdivide relatively larger districts into two or more smaller districts. Under this scheme, many tehsils/sub-districts have been given status of districts. Looking at the problem from a long-term perspective, all tehsils should be converted into districts and the administrators, presently posted at the Tehsil level, should be brought down to the Markaz level.

No government, howsoever affluent can undertake rural development without mobilisation of human and material resources at local level. In other words, it means a joint development action by village organisations, government departments, private sector, and all other agencies concerned with rural development. It is only through releasing creativity and initiative of individual from weaker sections who make our rural society or the bottom majority that rural development can take place in the real sense. It is also established that

rural people have the necessary experience, knowledge and insight to take decisions to formulate small projects at micro level provided they are given a chance to be involved.

GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

Grassroots organisations have many concrete expressions. They range from traditional local authorities to modern village councils, from single-purpose co-operatives to multipurpose farmers' association and many types of NGOs working both in rural as well as urban areas.

Rural development being an integrated process with social and political as well as economic and administrative dimensions, it is important that all types of grassroots rural organisations should be seen as a system of institutions performing various functions. They should have proper linkages between and among these organisations, both horizontally and vertically, to provide services, allocate resources and to exert influence. Grassroots institutions which are separated and isolated from other levels cannot play their role effectively in rural development.

Local institutions should have more than one level of organisations, preferably a two-tier pattern on which the lower tier performs functions at the small group level while the other undertakes more complex business and activities that require relatively large-scale operations. Local communities should be linked to higher level decision centres, both for mobilising resources and for organising and implementing development projects.

The local organisations tend to be dominated by local elites. This is one major reason why the poor and under-privileged have not been able to participate in the development process. It is, therefore, necessary that a system of plural local grassroots organisations be built outside the formalised and traditional framework, including local government. These counter-bailing organisations may be production groups, volunteer organisations, youth clubs, women associations, etc.

The NGO, as the name implies, is an organisation set up outside the government machinery by an individual or group of people to carry out voluntary social welfare and/or development work for the community. There are different NGOs involved in different activities in rural and urban areas. The origin of voluntary work in Pakistan, as elsewhere, can be traced back to social service with its antecedents in charity. Hence, its close links with social welfare in alleviating human sufferings. In time, emphasis shifted from the individual to the community. The age-old composition of social organisations has undergone many changes. The NGOs include, charitable groups,

trusts, foundations, associations, and differ in their origin and scope of work.

In Pakistan, where traditional agriculture still persists and where the small farmers and other rural workers constitute an important segment of the rural population, social and religious customs govern, to a very large extent, the various aspects of community life in the rural areas. The long established organisations of caste and clan, village and 'Deh' have evolved mainly to maintain traditions and to administer local affairs within them. They are not instruments of social or economic change but are instruments of social and cultural preservation. While conservation of social values is an important function in a society, socio-economic development of the rural population requires local organisations which would bring about social and economic change as well. One constructive activity for a public programme of rural development and family welfare, therefore, is to foster re-orientation of existing institutions or creation of new institutions at grassroots level which can assume the responsibility of encouraging individual and group initiative leading to economic improvement, social advancement, and orderly political growth.

In the evolution of rural institutions, Pakistan shares with India a legacy of four decades of sporadic experiences designed to promote better living in the villages. Before independence, local organisations varied according to the vagaries of administrative convenience or official ideology. The "Village Panchayats", the "Cooperative Credit Societies", the "Social Welfare Agencies" and the "Local-self Government" were created not for decentralisation of decision-making but for bringing about a change in the attitude of the traditional rural society so that it could contribute positively towards attainment of a more abundant life. These organisations were established under government decrees with a certain element of compulsion in them. Due to slow communication and cultural diversity in the sub-continent, they failed to generate conviction and confidence that were essential for their success. Consequently, the impact of all these efforts on the life of rural families and the overall progress of the country was only marginal in character.

At the time of independence in 1947, village--the backyard of Pakistan's national economy--was unkempt and disorganised. A long history of colonialism and feudalism eroded what was good in the well-integrated socio-economic structure of our villages. While colonialism and the influx of factory-made goods had broken the economic self-sufficiency of the rural sector, feudalism had destroyed the unity of the social fabric giving rise to problems of stagnation in agricultural production, inequalities of job opportunities, wide

disparities of income distribution and mass poverty.

After independence, the problem of restructuring the village life assumed much greater importance not because of economic reasons only but because of political considerations also. With the spread of aggressive nationalism all the world over, re-suscitation of agriculture to make the country self-sufficient in food and raw material and creation of a content peasantry emerged as the surest safeguard objects of government's future policy. It was realised that the urban-industrial model of the West would not suit Pakistan's setting because a vast majority of the country's population lived in about 45,000 villages under sub-normal conditions. For them, agriculture was not only a means of earning a livelihood but also a way of life.

It was in this context that the quest for a democratic social technology to constructively involve rural population in economic, social and political process of nation-building was started. In the initial stages, the institutional set-up of cooperatives, used by the British for rural uplift, was expanded. Primary agricultural credit societies, multipurpose cooperative societies, provincial cooperative banks, central cooperative banks, etc., were set up to organise farm services and provide cheap credit to the farmers.

The essential characteristics of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies were that the initial membership, which was confined to 10 individuals, later increased to 30. The members was themselves supposed to evaluate each other's credit requirements and credit worthiness. They were liable for the debts incurred by the society to the full extent of their property. The entrance fees charged on admission of members provided only a small proportion of the working capital. To advance loans to their members at low rate of interest, the societies raised funds from sources, internal and external. Members being mostly poor and unable to raise sufficient funds in the money market, the societies were buttressed by unlimited liability.

Despite numerical expansion of the cooperatives and inclusion of more and more activities in their domain, the contribution of these institutions to the economic growth of rural sector was, by and large, dismal except for a few scattered cases here and there. Co-operative credit, which was supposed to be their main function and the principal source of rural financing, did not actually reach the needy, i.e., the small farmers, the landless farm labourers, and the village craftsmen. Ten years after establishment of these organisations, the position was that not more than 10-12 per cent of the requirements of the small farmers were met by the cooperatives. Beneficiaries were mostly the influential land owners, who, by virtue of their better financial position, dominated management of these institutions. The agricultural societies which were conceptually

designed to curb the socio-political manifestations of the rural affluent, in practice, failed to conform to the cooperative ideal in many respects. Emphasis on thrift and self help, willing participation by the members, mutual supervision and productive use of credit, which were the distinctive features of these organisations, were wholly lacking. Because of inefficient management, unsound lending policies, vested interests, group politics, lack of adequate supervision over the use of loans, lack of recovery efforts and lack of control by the financing banks over the constituent societies, the government had to promulgate a Martial Law Order to recover outstanding payments from members and executives of more than Rs. 300 million and to initiate a complete overhaul of these institutions.

At the moment, there are not many private development oriented or welfare oriented organisations below district level operating in the rural areas of Pakistan. In certain parts of the country, particularly, Punjab and NWFP, there are ad hoc farmers' associations called Anjuman-i-Kasht Karan which safeguard the interests of sugarcane and paddy growers in marketing their produce with the millowners. Although some of them are registered with Cooperative Department, they do not have their branches extended up to all villages, with the result, they have a loose structure and little capital to invest in welfare programmes. Similarly, there are no separate organisations for agriculture workers, landless labourers, rural artisans, and educated unemployed. The result is that they are neither able to articulate their needs and aspirations, nor can they exert any influence on the management for satisfaction of their basic necessities. However, there are a number of social welfare agencies in the field which are registered with the provincial Social Welfare Departments and whose main function is to develop a spirit of community life among the people by promoting cooperation and mutual help among the people by promoting cooperation and mutual sharing. As part of their activities, these organisations take up some measures for the benefit of poorer sections, like literacy classes, teaching handicrafts and home economics, pre- and post-natal care, education, welfare of the handicapped, etc. The overall impact of all these activities on the welfare of peasant's family, however, has hitherto been insignificant.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

RDF was established in June 1987 under the Societies Act XXI of 1860 as a non-political, non-profit making and non-governmental organisation.

The Foundation is created with the belief that as a NGO--sensitive

to the needs, aspirations, capabilities and potential of rural people—it can play a positive role in support of government rural uplift efforts.

The Foundation believes that it can help in strengthening educational, social, economic and cultural efforts that are crucially vital to national progress, human advancement, and understanding.

Acting as a catalyst, the Foundation motivates village people to organise themselves and undertake development work on self-help basis and induces the government departments and other agencies to join hand with people at village level for comprehensive village development. In other words, RDF acting as bridge, fills the gap for meaningful rural development programmes at micro level.

The focus of the Foundation is on the target group, which comprises small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, artisans, craftsmen, drop-outs, women and youth, who are either under-employed or unemployed and living in villages below the bottom poverty line and constitute the vast majority of our rural population.

Rural development constitutes an integrated process which is indivisible and continuous and it reaches the overall socio-economic system of the country. Therefore, RDF believes in the following criteria for rural development:

1. Participation of people at village/group of villages level through group action farmers' associations, cooperatives, local government system, women associations, etc., for community projects.
2. Resource mobilisation, i.e., human and material with greater emphasis on the former by upgradation of skills, employment opportunities for men and women and improvement of rural infrastructure.
3. Decentralisation of decision-making process, both for planning and execution of projects, and establishing linkages, both vertical and horizontal, of grassroots organisations with public administration and private sector.
4. Effective delivery system to ensure that benefits of supplies, services and technology reaches the target-group according to their felt needs.
5. Evolution of self-reliant and self-supporting grassroots institutions with built-in mechanism for evaluation to ensure effective implementation and accountability.

Objectives

The ultimate aim of RDF is to stimulate and promote activities aimed at improving quality of life of rural people through diffusion

of useful knowledge (education and training) consciousness raising, research, organisation and development of human and material resources. With this aim in view, the Foundation is set to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identification of target groups, i.e., rural poor, their felt needs and problems.
2. To organise various interest groups and to assist them to formulate and implement small projects on self-help basis by stimulating group action and transfer of technology.
3. To undertake surveys, studies, feasibility reports, formulation of projects and evaluation of rural development programmes/projects for the government, national/international agencies, including UN family.
4. To carry out research on various aspects of rural development, i.e., increased production and productivity, improvement of infrastructure institutions, health, education, skills, employment, etc., to improve income of rural households.
5. To organise regular forums to study and highlight rural problems with a view to enlist support of government and other agencies by sharpening the focus on target groups.
6. To foster and develop contacts with rural development organisations, both in Pakistan and abroad, for sharing knowledge, experience and technology.
7. To publish and distribute literature through Rural Volunteer Corps (RVCs) in regional languages.
8. To finance research, scholarship and micro-level field projects to promote objectives of the Foundation.

Area

The Foundation has a 'core' staff which it expands on assignment basis, depending on the type of projects that are undertaken. The main areas of interest are: (1) Integrated human development, (2) Agriculture and rural development, (3) Innovative research for rural development and transfer of technology, (4) Micro level socio-economic planning and development, (5) Surveys and studies, (6) Social and physical infrastructure, (7) Projects planning, formulation, monitoring, and evaluation, (8) Rural-urban interaction studies, (9) Rural industrialisation, (10) Macro and micro-level policy studies, (11) population welfare, and (12) Training of rural workers, women and youth.

Rural Volunteer Corps (RVC) comprises progressive small farmers, non-farmers, retired government officials, drop-outs, women and youth, who have strong roots in the villages.

They help the Foundation in village surveys to prepare the village profiles and to fix priorities. They are motivators and change-agents. Once the village profile is ready, they, with the help of the Village Development Committees (VDC), formulate small projects for implementation as far as possible on self-help basis. RVC is also responsible for dissemination of information and feed-back.

The Foundation fulfils its aim and objectives and transacts business through its council, executive committee, technical committees and RVC.

RDF is still in a formative stage and is passing through initial teething trouble. However, work both in the field as well as in research has started in a modest way. The village profile leads to preparation of small projects with the help of the VDC, which is organised by the Foundation, before undertaking the surveys. The comprehensive village development plan, according to the priorities fixed by the people, is divided in three parts: (1) Projects which can be implemented by locals on self-help basis, (2) Projects which needs marginal support from outside to complete them, and (3) Projects which would require major assistance from government and other agencies for completion.

For source of financing, the Foundation relies on membership fees, donations, grants and consultancy services. Like any other NGO, the Foundation is also facing the resource constraints and deficiency of technical personnel.

Finally, it is recognised beyond any shadow of doubt that rural development would remain meaningless unless there is a close tri-lateral partnership of government, NGOs, and donors. Government should concentrate on activities in which they have a comparative advantage over the private sector. Government provide capital-intensive infrastructure. investment of public interest and institutional support. This will enable the private sector to be the main engine of economic development and for ensuring that benefits of growth are distributed in a fair and egalitarian manner throughout the society.

NGOs are an effective way for development to reach the grass-roots--marginal farmers, landless labourers, artisans, craftsmen, women, and youth. People's participation in development, particularly by women and youth organisations, is essential in all programmes to create the desired impact.

International agencies act as catalysts, and support NGO-government collaboration in poverty-alleviation programmes. They represent a non-partisan approach to development, and should enact programmes that facilitate an increased private sector's participation in development.

The Rural Development Foundation of Pakistan is the first NGO established at national level and it envisages to activate 45,000 grassroots NGOs--one in each village of Pakistan--so that, in due course of time, the RDF approach takes the shape of a rural development movement to transform the rural sector with full involvement of people. The Foundation believes that the development should start from the village in a systematic manner in collaboration with government, local government, private sector and other national and international agencies to improve the quality of life of rural poor, who are in majority and without their participation rural development would remain a dream.

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An Overview of Development Effort by Voluntary Agencies in Sri Lanka

L.M. SAMARASINGHE

AS IN most other countries in Asia, a very large percentage of the people of Sri Lanka belong to the rural sector. At present, this percentage is about 80. This indicates the importance of village and the factors that contribute to sustain rural living. Agriculture still remains the source of employment for nearly 50 per cent of the people. Traditionally, the people of the rural sector, engaged in agriculture, attached a great deal of importance to self sufficiency and self help. With the inroads of commerce and other forces in the fast-changing society, survival of the process of self sufficiency and self help naturally became impossible. Nevertheless, these valued practices of the agricultural societies have left lasting impressions and a little bit of the process is yet present in the life pattern of the people of most rural areas, and could be easily revived and harnessed for appropriate purposes and occasions connected with the development effort.

Traditionally, there were organisations of men and also women which were closely linked with religious activities organised at the village temple or connected with agricultural practices. The traditional village organisations were so well institutionalised that they remained far more resilient than the modern type of organisations.

Shramadana

The practice of shramadana--the gift of labour--had taken root in the Sri Lankan rural society for many centuries. It is the result of the civilising influence of Buddhism on the people for over 2000 years. Shramadana or gift of labour to promote a community or a religious need has been accepted as a meritorious deed which would be conducive to a better life for the giver, both in this life as well as in his future births. The men and women of a village would never hesitate to participate in any activity which would help the community or the place of worship in their village. People, who do not normally engage in manual work, would feel proud to participate in

any shramadana work to help the community.

Most of the religious edifices of temples in the rural sector have been completed with shramadana support and limited financial contributions. The construction of public roads, foot bridges, public wells, bathing places, irrigation reservoirs, channels, etc., were often the result of shramadana effort. Activities leading to improvement or protection of environment in the villages have also received shramadana support.

This, therefore, is an underlying force available to the community to be harnessed for village development purposes through the guidance of acceptable leadership. But due to the machinations of mercenary-minded personalities, enjoying positions of power or are close to seats of power, the current tendency is to grab contracts to carry out constructions necessary to provide community services.

EXAMPLES OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN THE VILLAGE

Types of voluntary organisations at village level would vary from village to village or from community to community. But some types of voluntary organisations are found in most villages.

The noteworthy feature in these village organisations is that matters, such as accounts keeping or election of office bearers, do not create crises as they sometimes do in urban based trade unions and other organisations. A few examples of such village voluntary organisation are as follows:

1. **Funeral Aid Societies**--These organisations are found in most villages. At a time of a funeral in a family, this organisation would come up to share the burden of the bereaved family in organising the funeral. They would make necessary arrangements for burial or cremation, organise sitting accommodation for sympathisers at the funeral house and attend to decoration as is customarily done on such occasions. The organisation also would make a cash donation to the family to meet immediate expenses of funeral. All adult members of the village are entitled to be the members of this organisation.
2. **Mutual Aid Societies**--These organisations seek to help families of the members in the village with easy loans and other assistance at occasions, such as time of illness, family urgencies connected with the progress of children, house repair or some other urgent need.
3. **Kantha Samiti or Womens Organisations**--These organisations seek to assist the women members to set up cottage crafts or other self-employment programmes, organise activities which

promote community life and function as an agency to promote development of women members of the village.

4. **Kulangana Samiti**--Literally this means the house wives association and is the organisation of the women to promote activities connected with village temple. Very often, these organisations are responsible for much of the development of village temples. Traditionally, their method of fund-raising is an extremely simple and most effective device. Each time a house wife goes to cook, she puts in a handful of rice into a separate pot and that rice is never used for the needs of the family thereafter. When the pot gets filled up, it is sold at the temple and the money is utilised to increase temple development fund.
5. **Temple Societies**--These are organisations of the men and are connected with the village temple. The patron is the incumbent monk of the temple. Men undertake activities necessary to promote development of the temple and also religious activities of the community.
6. **Farmer Groups**--These organisations seek to assist activities of farmers of a village. They coordinate activities with the state sector agencies that seek to promote agriculture or other farming activities.

Funding Pattern

The voluntary organisations (NGOs) could be divided into four broad groups, according to the funding pattern they command. They are as follows:

1. **Rural Development Societies** are voluntary organisations in villages. Guided and controlled by directives of state officials, these are under the Ministry of Rural Development. These societies depend on government assistance for their work programmes. They are free not to follow government instructions, but that would deprive the society of any government assistance.
Cooperative societies operate under a statute and are controlled by a Head of Department of the Government. Accounts of cooperative societies are audited by officers of Cooperative Department. They do not get funds from the Department but obtain bank loans with the assistance of Cooperative Department.
2. There is another category of voluntary organisations which receive government grants annually to meet expenses of activities undertaken by the organisation. These are mostly social

service organisations that run homes for children, senior citizens or disabled persons. Officers of Ministry of Social Services supervise those homes and exercise a certain degree of control on the activities of these organisations.

3. Some organisations are totally dependent on funds from donors abroad. Others supplement their local income with donor contributions. The total number of organisations that receive financial aid from donors is comparatively small. Many organisations, in fact, do not have the capacity to organise donor support.
4. There is another category of organisations which do not receive any financial support from donors or the government and depend on their own capacity to organise financial resources locally. A very large number of voluntary organisations belong to this category. There is room for improving methodologies of local fund-raising. Many of the organisations that fall in this category remain comparatively poor.

TPOLOGY OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Voluntary Agencies (NGOs), engaged in promoting development programmes, associate themselves in a variety of activities. These, however, could be classified into following three broad groups according to the type of activity they are engaged in: (1) Reserach/Documentation, (2) Social Services/Welfare Action, and (3) Development Action.

A few of the leading NGOs are engaged in research. This is rather an expensive exercise and they depend on funding from external sources. They also undertake consultancies on research and specific studies for international organisations. Preparation of documentation, publications, holding seminars, workshops, conferences and study sessions are their main activities.

NGOs engaged in social services/welfare action are those that provide direct deliveries of services. They organise and maintain homes for senior citizens, children and disabled persons. They seek to improve social amenities, health and sanitation, nutrition, child-care services, adult education and such others through direct deliveries. Quite a large number of NGOs belong to this group. They have been engaged in the field for a long time: there are some which are rendering services for over a century in their specific fields. Many of them, there for over 50 years.

NGOs engaged in development action are those that attempt to deal with productive base of a community by trying to help enhancement of productive capacity of the people of that community. This is

comparatively a new development and the NGOs of this group are there for not more than 25 years. Different approaches are adopted by various NGOs of this group. There is much response shown by the donor community in supporting development activities of these NGOs. Quite a large number of the NGOs engaged in development action, do so in isolated situations. They do not have the capacity nor the resources to raise the level of their development activities to the level of regional development programmes, covering a wider geographical area. There is, however, an increasing tendency at present to place emphasis on economic development of the people.

LEGAL STATUS

There is no requirement in law for a voluntary agency (NGO) to register with the government. There are many NGOs which are not registered at all in the legal sense. But the NGOs are aware that registration gives them an elevation in status and very often the donor agencies show a preference to deal with NGOs that are legally registered. In any case, if a particular NGO desires to be recognised as an approved charity, then registration becomes a pre-requisite. No NGO, which is not registered, would be recognised by the Ministry of Finance to be accepted as an approved charity.

Methods of acquiring legal status are as follows:

1. **Incorporation Under an Act of Parliament**--Under this procedure, constitution of an NGO would have to be introduced in Parliament as a Private Member's Bill. Parliament accepts such Bills if it is for public advantage to incorporate such organisations. When such a Bill is passed, the constitution of the organisation is incorporated into the body of Legislative Enactments. This is comparatively an involved process, but the status it confers on the organisation is quite prestigious.
2. **Incorporation Under Provisions of the Companies Act as a Non-profit Organisation**--The Companies Act, which provides for registration of all business houses and organisations, provides for registration of non-profit organisations by the Registrar of Companies.
3. **Registration Under Provisions of the Societies Ordinance**--This is the commonest method of seeking registration by most organisations. The procedures involved are less expensive and comparatively faster.

There are a larger number of NGOs which have obtained registration

under any of the above mentioned procedures. Many of them do wish to be registered but the procedures involved are too cumbersome for them to go through. There are also organisations which enjoy prestigious positions and are recognised by many international donor agencies for purposes of functioning as their local agent, but yet they remain unregistered, and it is legally possible for them to do so.

BROAD GROUPS

NGOs functioning at the secondary or intermediate level and the national level could be identified under certain broad groups. many NGOs, in fact, are operative at the primary, secondary and the national levels. Many of them are also engaged in social services, welfare action, and also development action. During the current period, there is a tendency for most organisations to engage in development action wherever possible. The broad groups referred to are as follows.

1. **Religious Organisations**--The religious organisations belong to the Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Muslim faiths. Some of these organisations had their beginnings during the latter part of the last century. Their religious activities were also associated with education, social service and welfare programmes for the communities they served. Many of them have an impressive record of service and were concerned with human development and, now, many of them are also promoting economic development of the people they serve.
2. **Social Service Organisations**--The earliest voluntary organisations in Sri Lanka belong to this group. There are Friend-in-Need Societies that are existing for over 150 years. Many of these organisations came on quite early in setting up homes for aged, destitutes, orphans and disabled. Welfare services, child-care services and many other social service programmes have been activated by those organisations. They also lay emphasis on education and training, particularly for the youth.
3. **Womens Organisations**--Position of women in Sri Lankan society vary according to the community they belong to. The personal law of one community confers on women of a particular position a status superior to that of men while the status of women under the personal law of another community is far below that of men. There are other personal laws which makes the woman dependent on her father before marriage and the husband after marriage. Majority of women enjoy equal legal status with men

under the general law. The economic position of women, however, has remained poor which has made them completely dependent on their parents or husbands. Higher education and job opportunities for women have come only during recent times. Domestic drudgery has been the lot of most women due to poor income level of the families they belong to. Income generation outside the traditional pattern has been introduced to them only in recent times.

An organisation that has done pioneering work in promoting development of rural women in Sri Lanka is the Lanka Mahila Samiti, which was set up in 1930. Training of rural women for self-employment and economic activity based on locally available resources, and training in pre-school education, home science, health and nutrition were their priorities from the beginning.

The Sri Lanka Womens Conference, which was set up about four decades ago, is a federation of womens organisations and seeks to promote economic, social and cultural development of women.

4. **NGOs Promoting Health, Nutrition and Child Care Services**-- There are many NGOs engaged in promoting health and sanitation, nutrition, child-care services and family health. It is a matter of justifiable pride that the FPA, a leading NGO, started pioneering work in family planning in Sri Lanka when the rate of population increase was close to four per cent in 1953. It was 12 years later that government adopted the policy of promoting family planning and today the rate of increase is just over one per cent. Much of the credit for this achievement should go to the NGO sector.

In the fields of health, sanitation, nutrition and child-care services too, contribution of the NGO sector is very considerable.

5. **NGOs Promoting Rural Development**--This really is a mixed group of NGOs activating various programmes in different locations. The programmes they promote fall into a variety of fields. But all of them have a common objective--improvement of the living standard of the community they serve. Some of the activities these NGOs promote may be listed as follows:

Self-employment programmes,
Small industries at village level for men and women,
Participatory development processes,
Integrated community development projects,
Dairy projects,
Reforestation projects,

Promotion of bio-gas usage,
Home gardening programmes,
Water management projects, and
Organisation of non-formal education.

This is merely to indicate the mixed nature of the activities that these NGOs promote. The total list, in fact, is quite long and varied.

6. **Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation**--Many NGOs have shown a response at times of disaster in providing relief and organising rehabilitation of affected people. In recent times, there have been many occasions when NGO assistance was sought in this particular direction and the response has always been most encouraging.

Rural Development Societies

Rural Development Societies were organised in all parts of the country commencing 1947 with the assistance of State officials. The government set up a Department of Rural Development with officials and there is now a Government Minister, in-charge of the subject. Initially, they performed the most vital task of organising rural people to undertake community development. The resource base for movement was shramadana and the performance they showed during the first decade of service was remarkable. Thereafter, seekers of political power set heavily on this nascent rural institution and virtually crippled it. The people later completely lost confidence in them. Today, in spite of there being a ministry to support these organisations, they do not enjoy full confidence of the people. Rural Development Societies are not NGOs, but nevertheless they are accepted as peoples' organisations under the supervision of State officials and also receiving State assistance.

Cooperative Movement

Cooperative Societies were started in Sri Lanka as early as in 1911. During the first 50 years of their existence, the record of service to the people was remarkable. The Thrift and Credit Cooperative Societies, during the early period, were a great help to the rural people. During the period of war from 1939-46 they performed the most difficult task of distributing scarce food supplies to the people. Cooperative societies were geared later on to handle a multiplicity of functions essential for rural life. These organisations became comparatively large business houses and Mr. Politician took advantage of the situation and made the cooperatives his local power base. The inevitable then happened. People developed a

contempt for cooperatives. They lost all confidence in this popular rural institution. The term 'cooperative' almost sounded like a bad word to the people. An attempt has been made in recent times to keep politicians away from these institutions. But the cooperatives have not so far regained the lost confidence of the people.

STATUS OF GOVERNMENT-NGO RELATIONS

The Government of Sri Lanka is providing an environment for the growth of NGOs, the equal of which is not found in most other countries in the Asian region. There is no compulsion for registration of NGOs. No questions are asked when donor contributions are received from abroad. NGO persons can freely travel out of the country. They can purchase the quota of foreign exchange for their expenses abroad. NGOs are allowed to carry on with their programmes without any interference. This, in short, is the bright side of the story. The dark side is that many government departments show a reluctance to recognise the existence of NGOs. There are certain ministries which are concerned with certain welfare policies and implementation of these policies is done through NGOs. Their work is supervised by officials of such ministries. The relationship in such instances is cordial and satisfactory. But there are several other government agencies which implement development policies of the government, but are reluctant to share the burden with NGOs.

At the field level, the degree of coordination between the government officials and NGO persons is far more satisfactory than at the Centre.

Here, again, when the field-level officer is aware that his head office is not very enthusiastic about relationship with NGOs, he would naturally play safe. The Ministry of Plan Implementation has been helpful to NGOs wherever possible. An attempt was made by the NGOs two years back to build up an understanding between Government Organisation (GOs) and NGOs by organising a workshop to which GOs, NGOs and the donor community were invited. Participation of GOs was far below the expectation and the desired results from the workshop, therefore, were not achieved fully. This reluctance on the part of certain GOs is possibly a result of the past colonial hang-over and would clear up only after some time.

SOME CONSTRAINTS

NGOs engaged in development activities do have to face several constraints at the moment. The main constraint is lack of funds for implementation of their programmes. The main source of funds for NGO come from donors abroad. The donors' priorities do not always match

with the priorities of the NGOs. When development projects are drawn up, NGOs have to wait until some donor is willing to fund the project. Here, again, the donor may want to suggest certain changes. Of the many NGOs engaged in promoting development programmes, only a few have succeeded in locating donors. The rest have not been able to do their best due to very limited resources at their command. There is a need to establish a local fund to enable NGOs to draw from for their needs.

It is also a felt need that an NGO body at the apex should co-ordinate the in-flow of funds to local NGOs so that the optimum use of such resources could be ensured. There is also a tendency among the donor community to set up their own link agency to channel their funds. Experience has shown that this method itself does not ensure flow of funds to deserving projects of NGOs.

NGOs also suffer from a dearth of opportunities for imparting management and other skills for their personnel. State sector Management Training Institutes do not admit NGO personnel and private sector Management Training Institutes are far too expensive for NGOs.

Absence of sufficient opportunities for exposure to helpful criticism and evaluation of progress is also a disadvantage. Criticism and evaluation, even in a constructive way, is sometimes not viewed with favour by some NGOs due mostly to want of regular opportunities for such exposure. NGOs themselves need to build up processes and mechanisms whereby they could benefit from regular evaluation of their work programmes as helpful partners in development. Other than the few NGOs that command sufficient financial resources for their needs, most other NGOs depend on voluntarism of their leadership to perform the day-to-day tasks. This arrangement was reasonably satisfactory when the costs of services were not beyond the average person. But, today, costs, such as transportation and other services, have gone beyond the capacity of the average persons to bear. The effectiveness of voluntarism, therefore, is considerably reduced. There is a need to have full-time employees in the work places of the NGOs to assist the leadership and relieve them of the burdens of managing day-to-day affairs on a voluntary basis. This, of course, is again dependent on the financial status of the NGOs.

COORDINATION AMONG NGOS

The need for coordination among voluntary organisations undertaking social welfare and relief measures was felt in the 1930s. Measures were then taken by government to regulate activities of Social Service Organisations. A coordinating body was set up in 1946, called the Central Council of Social Services, to coordinate the work of the various organisations engaged in social service work.

This organisation is a coalition of NGOs engaged in social service work. It functions in close liaison with the Ministry of Social Services and is an unofficial adviser to the ministry on matters pertaining to social services.

The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, held in 1979, was a turning point for the development NGOs in Asia. Consequent to that conference, the Asian NGOs decided to set up the Asian NGO Coalition (ANGOC), a regional coordinating body for NGOs. One of the decision taken at that time was that, in each country, there should be a national network of NGOs functioning as a apex body coordinating the work of development NGOs, particularly in the field of agrarian reform and rural development. In Sri Lanka, a National Committee of NGOs was formed in 1980 for this purpose and in 1981, this committee decided to form the National NGO Council to function as a coordinating umbrella organisation of the NGOs of Sri Lanka. This Organisation started with 17 member NGOs and, today, its membership consists of 94 member NGOs. Almost 95 per cent of the development NGOs, functioning at the national level, are its members and this list has been increasing with more and more NGOs joining in almost every month.

The National NGO Council has so far provided liaison between State sector agencies and NGOs, whenever necessary, to do so and has performed a spokesman role. It has also negotiated with leading State banks to create certain loan schemes to facilitate specific rural development programmes of smaller NGOs. It provides periodical training opportunities for NGOs in respect of certain specific areas of action in which smaller NGOs need guidance and assistance. The Council has also obtained opportunities for training of nominees of member organisations at reputed international training centres in other Asian countries.

The NGO Council holds group discussions, workshops and meeting for the benefit of its member NGOs in addition to the role of coordination of NGO programmes with international and UN agencies.

There is a regular demand from smaller NGOs for the services of the NGO Council. However, the Council itself suffers from many obstacles at present. The main obstacle, of course, is lack of funds to meet various requirements.

The future obviously is quite bright for the development NGO sector. The people, particularly in the rural sector are tired of organisations that are linked to party politics. NGOs, therefore, before long would be called upon to handle a good part of activities of the development field. But this also necessarily means that the NGOs themselves need to put their own houses into good order to meet the challenges effectively.

Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes—Involvement of Voluntary Agencies (in the Seventh Five-Year Plan) *

THERE IS a good deal of voluntary effort in India, especially in the field of social welfare. The tendency so far has been to equate the work of voluntary agencies with only welfare activities and charity work. Involvement of other agencies in the non-government sector, such as trade unions, cooperatives and Panchayati Raj bodies, has tended to blur the identity of those which can be strictly defined as voluntary organisations. There has been inadequate recognition of their role in accelerating the process of social and economic development. These agencies have been known to play an important role by providing a basis for innovation with new models and approaches, ensuring feedback and securing the involvement of families living below the poverty line. Therefore, during the Seventh Plan, serious efforts will be made to involve voluntary agencies in various development programmes, particularly in the planning and implementation of programmes of rural development. Voluntary agencies have developed expertise and competence in many non-traditional areas to plan their own schemes instead of expecting government to do so. More specifically, the role of voluntary agencies in the implementation of development:

- (i) To supplement government effort so as to offer the rural poor choices and alternatives;
- (ii) To be the eyes and ears of the people at the village level;
- (iii) To set an example. It should be possible for the voluntary agency to adopt simple, innovative, flexible and inexpensive means with its limited resources to reach a larger number with less overheads and with greater community participation.
- (iv) To activate the delivery system and to make it effective at the village level to respond to the felt needs of the poorest of the poor;
- (v) To disseminate information;
- (vi) To make communities as self-reliant as possible;
- (vii) To show how village and indigenous resources could be used, how human resources, rural skills and local knowledge, grossly underutilised at present could be used for their own development.
- (viii) To demystify technology and bring it in a simpler form to the rural poor;
- (ix) To train a cadre of grassroot workers who believe in professionalising volunteerism;
- (x) To mobilise financial resources from within the community with a view to making communities stand on their own feet; and

* Extract from Chapter 2, **Seventh Five-Year Plan, 1985-90**, Vol. 2, New Delhi, Planning Commission, pp. 68-70.

- (xi) To mobilise and organise the poor and generate awareness to demand quality services and impose a community system of accountability on the performance of village-level government functionaries.

Voluntary agencies are essentially non-profit and non-partisan organisations. The criteria for identifying voluntary agencies for enlisting help in relation to the rural development programmes can be as follows:

- (i) The organisation should be a legal entity.
- (ii) It should be based in a rural area and be working there for a minimum of 3 years.
- (iii) It should have broad-based objectives serving the social and economic needs of the community as a whole and mainly the weaker sections. It must not work for profit but on 'no profit and no loss basis'.
- (iv) Its activities should be open to all citizens of India irrespective of religion, caste, creed, sex or race.
- (v) It should have the necessary flexibility, professional competence and organisational skills to implement programmes.
- (vi) Its office bearers should not be elected members of any political party.
- (vii) It declares that it will adopt constitutional and non-violent means for rural development purposes.
- (viii) It is committed to secular and democratic concepts and methods of functioning.

In order to assist and support voluntary agencies in the implementation of Anti-poverty and Minimum Needs Programme, there is need for a consolidated approach in the field of social welfare and social services, that is, for conventional voluntary agencies, there is already the Central Social Welfare Board with their state branches. For integrated rural development and allied services covered by the Anti-poverty and Minimum Needs Programme in the Seventh Plan period there is need to enlarge the function and scope of People's Action for Development (India): PADI.

The accent in the Seventh Plan will be to professionalise volunteerism, to introduce professional competence (delinked from degrees) and managerial expertise in keeping with the resources and capabilities of voluntary agencies to be in a position to meet the basic requirements of government in terms of accountability. Voluntary agencies, however, will need to give greater attention to mobilise locally available human and financial resources, identify people in the poorer and vulnerable occupations like farmers, rural artisans, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, agricultural labourers, girijans and bonded labourers, upgrade their skills and give them the tools to make them economically self-sufficient as well as productive.

There has to be mutual trust and understanding between government and voluntary agencies at the village level. If at the higher levels there is general indifference to voluntary agencies, at the village level there is often open hostility. For want of an established forum where voluntary agencies could be given an opportunity to explain their position and defend themselves or bring field problems to the notice of the state governments, the situation that now

prevails is not conducive to full participation of voluntary agencies.

The need to establish a regular forum was felt during the Sixth Plan period when the late Prime Minister in October 1982 wrote to all the chief ministers that consultative groups of voluntary agencies must be established at the state level. It is hoped that during the Seventh Plan period such consultative groups will be established in all states and given operational responsibilities. It is proposed that at the Central level, voluntary effort in the rural development sector with its allied services is promoted on a much larger scale with greater responsibilities through PADI and such other bodies as may be established. The state-level consultative groups recommended by the late Prime Minister headed by either the Chief Secretary or the Development Commissioner should be registered under the Societies Registration Act as People's Action for Development (PAD).

For voluntary effort to succeed, guidelines will be formulated to minimise delays and harassment by frequent reference of project proposals to various government (Central and state) departments/agencies. PAD should prepare a panel of experts available in the voluntary sector in different states/districts who are prepared to assist on a professional and consultancy basis in the planning and implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes through voluntary agencies. There are officials in the Central and state governments who are keen to offer their services and experience to upgrade professionalism in the voluntary sector. Suitable steps will be taken to facilitate this. Professional and consultancy services to voluntary agencies could also include those by retired personnel and ex-servicemen.

The programmes and areas in which the participation of voluntary agencies can be of great help for better implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes are:

- (i) Integrated Rural Development/Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme/TRYSSEM;
- (ii) Implementation of land ceiling and distribution of surplus land;
- (iii) Enforcement of minimum wages to agricultural labourers;
- (iv) Identification and rehabilitation of bonded labour;
- (v) Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;
- (vi) Supply of safe drinking water : repair and maintenance of water supply systems with community support;
- (vii) Afforestation, social forestry, development of biogas and alternative energy sources (solar and wind energy, improved chulas);
- (viii) Promotion of family planning;
- (xi) Primary health care; control of leprosy, TB, blindness; preventive health programmes using village resources;
- (x) Programmes for women and children in rural areas;
- (xii) Innovative methods and low-cost alternatives in elementary, primary and middle school education for children, adult education and non-formal and informal education;
- (xiii) Consumer protection : promotion of cooperatives;
- (xiv) Promotion of handicrafts and village and cottage industries;
- (xv) Promotion of science and technology;
- (xvi) Legal education;
- (xvii) Rural housing : improvement of rural slums;

- (xvii) Environmental and ecological improvement; and
- (xviii) Promotion and encouragement, of traditional media for dissemination of information.

The human resource available in the training infrastructure of voluntary agencies need to be mobilised and used more effectively at the village level in the Seventh Plan period. The non-formal and informal skills, methods and approaches of building confidence among the rural poor to undertake responsibilities of planning and implementing programmes on their own, that training institutions in the voluntary sector have developed, needs to be considered for replication on a larger scale.

There is need for voluntary agencies to decide on a code of conduct to be applicable to those agencies receiving government funds.

It is proposed that about Rs. 100-150 crore of Plan expenditure in the Central and State sectors on the programmes listed above may be earmarked for use in active collaboration with voluntary agencies. This involvement could take many forms. In certain cases a programme or some of its components could be implemented directly by the voluntary agency in a specified area. In certain others they could participate in the process of planning, mobilisation, monitoring and evaluation and be assisted by suitable grants-in-aid. These and other modalities of involvement would vary from case to case but the intention is to ensure that the financial target given above is realised on a national scale.

Voluntary Action or Collusion ? *

S.K. DEY

I ask you (youngmen) to go the villages and busy yourselves there, not as their masters or benefactors, but as their humble servants. Let them know what to do and how to change their modes of living from your daily conduct and way of living. Only feeling will be of no use just like steam, which by itself is of no account unless it is kept under proper control when it becomes a mighty force. I ask you to go forth as messengers of God carrying balm for the wounded soul of India.

--MAHATMA GANDHI

KURUKSHETRA, THE Journal, began as a weekly in the year 1948 at Nilokheri. Nilokheri was the first experiment on a rural-cum-urban township, by way of the rehabilitation of persons displaced following partition. The concept later came to be called a 'growth centre' by the learned. The township was pursued, virtually in week to week consultation with Prime Minister Nehru. The journal came naturally to the centre as the mouthpiece of the Community Development Programme. This programme had followed Nilokheri backed by many an experiment earlier as well as contemporaneous.

Kurukshetra, now a monthly, as defined by Nehru himself, was the symbol of the eternal process of warfare between good and evil in nature. It was to be an open forum between workers and public alike, totally free of censor of any kind for the programme and the process were to belong to the people themselves. A strident call comes from the editor for an article from one who has chosen to live life today as a virtual recluse. He has had more than a full span of joys and tears, causes won and lost. A natural hesitancy follows necessarily even in the pen that should scribble. However, she was stubborn, and she won. This is so, especially because of the new message of the young Prime Minister on the eve of August 15, 1985, that Panchayati Raj which is "power to the people" as means and end, must be revived. The chief ministers are said to have been asked by him to give an account of what they proposed to do as regards elections, strengthening of authority, responsibility and resources. This meant all is yet not lost. Nehru may live again.

Voluntary action, by its very definition, means action by and for a free people. Indeed when extrapolated, this may mean a battle for 'freedom' itself. For, this battle is a perennial one and is yet to begin. Only the battle against colonialism under a foreign power had

*Reproduced from Kurukshetra, Vol. XXXIV, No.1, October 1985, pp. 4-7

been won after nearly a 100 years of unrelenting struggle. One begins, however, to wonder if this too is not snaking to come back with new cloaks in "collusion" with their counterparts amongst us in the name of "collaboration". It is obvious, lessons must continue to be drawn from the past--positive as well as negative. The road towards tomorrow has to be aligned across the debris of what remains of yesterday and stares with bloodshot eyes today.

One has to express oneself in the kaleidoscopic pattern. For, the stock of experiences behind are deep and wide enough to make volumes. Nilokheri is the town opposite the 85th mile post on the Grand Trunk Road from Delhi. It is a living example of voluntary action as a totality in its shape, texture, planning and execution by workers trained locally. The training covered brick making, masonry, carpentry, smithy, in all the crafts including agriculture, horticulture, dairy and all the other civic necessities to service the colony and alongside the villages around. It was designed for a population of 5,000. The current population is more than 15,000 with every child enrolled in schools. It is free totally of unemployment, of communal differences. The Gurdwara, Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharam temples stand alongside, totally unruffled, despite the continuing ugliness of violence across the north. Agriculturists were turned out of professional moneylenders from north west province of erstwhile India. Today they are amongst the best cultivators in north India, thanks to a graduate in agriculture to set an example by acting as a volunteer. He has received a reclaimed land of 6 acres allotted to his share at Nilokheri. Same example followed in other enterprises in the little habitat. People had learnt the ideal of cooperation through action with blood, sweat and tears. They suffer today, for they do not function in collusion with the department of cooperation. Coordination earlier known under community development being virtually dead, can hardly help either.

As programme of the establishment of Nilokheri approached the end of its first stage, followed the programme of community development. Before even the formal programme had started on October 2, 1952, outstanding work had been done by people with the special zeal and leadership of the Block Development officers alongwith the others by his side and above him. A few illustrations alone as part of the countrywide phenomenon must demonstrate what voluntary action did mean. Roads have been built by villagers cutting across paddy fields about to ripen in a month, as a 100 feet corridor of 19 miles connecting 17 villages. People were determined to ply their bullock carts on the new road before the Dussehra week. Tribals of villages encamped with tools, lights and food, of their own in Madhya Pradesh, banded two hill sides into a permanent tank for irrigation and drinking water. Primary schools have been built throughout the country in their tens of thousands year after year to present to Nehru as their gift on his birthday November 14, now a Children's Day, to the visible chargin of many a notable in the politics of the day.

We may come to the field of cooperation, designed to be a political. The most surprising of surprises lie in the fact that the little Amul Cooperative of district Khera in Gujarat headed by the leadership of a volunteer Tribhuban Das Patil and a genius of a technician Dr. Kurien spread Amul Cooperative dairy to cover the

State of Gujarat as a whole. The system now struggles to spread the same gospel and practice across India as a whole. The little prabhakara Sugar Cooperative, initiated by a completely unlettered man with the help of sugarcane growers in neighbourhood, drove out private sugar factories from the whole of Maharashtra. The State Cooperative Sugar Federation now produces nearly 40 per cent of sugar of the country. The idea is spreading to other parts of the country also, even through at slow pace. This is a political movement of purely economic cooperation based on voluntary action and democracy. One need not elaborate on cooperative spinning mills, ginning mills and units of diverse other kinds. There have been giants in the cooperative field--Vaikunth Bhai Mehta, Prof. D.G. Karve, Prof. A.R. Gadgil of the the Gokhle Institute of Poona, subsequently the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and many others. But they are no more. Those who have taken their place, will appear to be of different genus.

What happened to voluntary action of such a character, to earn the abolition even of the word "Community Development" from the dictionary of the Government of India? What accounts for the abolition of the first, and last exclusive ministry of community development, panchayati raj and sahakari samaj in the world, of which Nehru had been most proud? Where are the millions of Gram Sahayaks (composed of five progressive farmers from every village) meeting, learning and cross fertilising as a regular weekly feature annually? They had been acting as voluntary extension agents to demonstrate and spread the message as examples of what they practised and achieved. Where are the large number of national federation of cooperative institutions at the centre covering virtually every specialised field in production basically from the soil upwards? How does one account for the musical chairs in continuing rotation for seats at the peak of these federations that came into being through sweat and blood to feed and nourish the line all along down to the ground!

How does one account for the white and black contrast between the reality that once was, and the fiction that rules by and large today? Perhaps some instances cited here may be of help. In a national conference of State ministers of Cooperation at Hyderabad, the Central minister was challenged by a prominent member of the party then ruling in Andhra. "You want cooperation; abolish the talk of joint cooperative farming and land reforms", he shouted. "Were you not present at Nagpur when the decision had been taken by the party?" was the question raised by the minister. The exasperated member replied, "Yes, I was present." We agreed with Nehru on 'principles' assuming he would continue agreeing with us on practices".

Once Nehru was gone--May 27, 1964, a stalwart kept at bay by Nehru came in power over Madhya Pradesh at Bhopal. The State had earlier abolished the British created District and Local Board to be replaced by panchayati raj already legislated upon. What to speak of panchayati raj, community development as a programme itself got abolished in Madhya Pradesh. The matter was raised on the floor of the Lok Sabha. Strange as it may sound today, the question arose as a chorus from every corner--from the ruling party to the opposition--as to why the ministry at the centre itself should not be abolished. Lal Bahadur Shastri who sat quiet, was followed by the minister to his

cabin in parliament with his resignation. Lal Bahadur, the soft spoken man, tried to pacify the minister in agony, by an assurance that such things happened in politics and one should never suffer a dismay on such accounts. He added in parenthesis though, that he did not share the unquestioned faith of Nehru in people ruling themselves. But these matters should be thought of in the party at a later stage, but not so soon after Nehru is no more! Another example in this context also may prove of interest to readers. While on a visit to Anand, attracted by the outstanding reputation of the Amul Cooperative Dairy, the licence was promised for a new dairy in western UP to the private sector headed by Hindustan Levers. This happened despite the refusal earlier of the proposition by the central ministry in pursuance of the directive of Nehru covering cooperative for all sectors of agricultural processing.

One more illustrations may be equally illuminating. The central minister while travelling in the compartment next to late C.B. Gupta, the then chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, was asked by the latter to sit quietly and watch. The chief minister kept busy dealing with the piles of files he had carried from Lucknow to handle while travelling alone in train. MLAs from UP took the opportunity virtually beyond midnight visiting him one after the other. They had nothing else to ask except promotion, demotion or transfer of officers. They also complained bitterly over the way the Block Panchayat Samiti Presidents were monopolising their hold with powers they possessed. What little chances would be left for them when State elections came next time, the MLAs asked. Tragically what applied to State Assembly members by and large, in a big way, applied likewise to their counterparts in the Lok Sabha. It is no matter of surprise that early 1966 saw the abolition of community development, panchayati raj and sahakari samaj ministry. Coordination achieved through 15 years of hard work lay buried in the archives for future research.

With political leadership ruling as well as opposition being in the mood as they manifested after Nehru, the concept of community development, panchayati raj and sahakari samaj could not but be doomed. Progressive usurpation of power by the State from down below, had to find its **quid pro quo** in the direct as well as indirect encroachment on State power by the centre. The Sarkaria Commission now in action is the direct by-product of the process. The latest statement by the Prime Minister on devolution of authority, resources and responsibilities to panchayati raj institution seems like the forerunner of reversal of the damage in between. Voluntary action must now find a wide field and scope afresh for action. There are epic lessons offered by the past since independence, starting from Nilokheri onwards including besides Government supported or subsidised programmes, and the giants working their ways with people across the country. The young Prime Minister means business as he makes the clarion call. The first pre-requisite even for an earnest effort again, is the creation of the Ministry with no subject matter of its own. It must be headed by a vital person ruthless to himself and with equity towards differing political thoughts across the country. It must deal with panchayati raj, sahakari samaj as well as community development. It must cover voluntary action as well as local works programme on expanding scales. Indeed the Ministry will be for people's institutions, voluntary action and an attorney of the

people.

An effort may be made to sum up what should be done through voluntary action in the rural areas, and what must be steered totally clear of. It can be stated categorically at the very outset that one who has not known poverty and not surmounted it, and then outgrown the fruit itself as a natural course, cannot act as a voluntary worker. Indeed such a person is totally misfit seeking but self-employment under the cloak of "collaboration". We may leave alone under this study born saints such as Buddha, Shankara, Chaitanya, Nanak, Ramakrishna and the hosts of others in all ages and climes. Such exceptions stand above the normal stratum of the world. The common dictum, "the shoe needs mending where it pinches" is confirmation of the Bengali phrase "the aunt suffering more from labour pains than the mother" is a matter for serious concern. The rural areas must be developed by the rural people if they are to be self-reliant as an imperative. In the ultimate analysis man-making is a much more exacting and crucial undertaking. One must also bear in mind the universal fact that man learns to walk out from anyone else's shoulder or feet.

Rural areas must have the basic essential such as obtain in urban settlements. Power must come to the people under adequate legislation, supervision, audit and technical guidance, inputs through local government (panchayati raj) or cooperatives. Cooperative institutions supported and assisted by government must under no circumstances be headed by ministers as had been the case sternly enforced while Nehru ruled India. Villages must create yuvak mandals, kisan mandals, mahila mandals and bal mandals. These must be encouraged, to promote voluntary work by or on behalf of the village people. The land army programme encouraged and inspired by elected representatives hold substantially unlimited scope for voluntary action by people. It also is a substantial source of employment during lean periods idle from agriculture and other work. Village electrification is now a planned programme for the country as a whole, so also communication, sanitation, health, education and recreation. What one must ponder here, and deeply, enough, is that the expression "rural development" is a total misnomer unless it is to be taken as a mere geographic expression. Rural development must mean a rural-cum-urban continuum.

No matter how fast we move with our population planning programme, the people will continue growing for quite a time yet. There is no vacant territory in the world that our surplus population can occupy. Nor are there colonies of the kind elsewhere such as bore the brunt of western colonialism now near extinction. The metropolitan cities in India throughout are crossing the border line between order and chaos. This is because of the phenomenal one way traffic from rural towards the urban to the eventual degradation of both. Therefore, urban basic amenities supported by decentralisation of cottage craft and small scale agro-industries including manufacture of tools, appliances and maintenance are a high imperative. This is where voluntary action by entrepreneurs is called for, not social work backed by government subsidy or exemption from taxation to some of our so-called benevolent industrialists.

Institutions from national, State and other levels may undertake evaluation of work--political, economic or social, as survey over time for purpose of their own and public information. There is no room whatsoever for voluntary action by external agencies by-passing panchayati raj, cooperatives and people's own institutions whenever people have their own funds or their own institutions are provided with funds by government. Voluntary institutions from above can only turn collaboration into collusion in exploitation of the villagers still too naive to discriminate between the simple plain-clothesman and the pseudo sadhus with the "Ram nam" wrapper around his body.

The story-pregnant with all its sadness may come to an end citing two important incidents. Nehru had asked his guest Arnold Toynbee the historian, to have a talk with the author on the latter's work on community development. Toynbee summarised his reading of history in simple words. The naive and trusting villagers throughout history have been bearing the burden of the middle and upper classes till they could do so no more. So civilization had to come to a close time and again with the nomads having overtaken the land to build up from scratch. The stormy petrel in the Labour Government of the day, Aneurin Bevan was personal guest of Prime Minister Nehru. He was sent to Agra under the care of the author both for the Taj and for a look at village work. It was the first visit of Bevan to the Taj. He confessed, he felt dumb over the beauty at mid moonlight night. Next morning he confessed, he had disturbed sleep. Time and again thoughts arose to trouble him. He could see the tens of thousands of village people over the ages who bore the brunt of the beauty and grandeur of the royal graveyard and with what returns for themselves! "Will man never learn that life cannot but be a two way traffic?"

Aneurin bevan was a coal miner's son who rose to a peak of political reputation in United Kingdom by sheer hard work and self-reliance. He fully understood the motive behind community development, panchayati raj and sahakari samaj. He wondered if the rapidly growing middle and upper classes could continue to be borne by the multitude on their shoulders except as part of a collusive connection with the government. He also questioned how long such a situation could endure in the communicational world of today. Tragic, a great man young and vital with such a telescopic vision had to pass away in so premature a manner in time. Perhaps providence was kinder to him.

Two Judicial Decisions Having a Bearing on Voluntary Organisations

I

AIR 1986 SUPREME COURT 1322

P.N. BHAGWATI, C.J., V. KHALID AND M.M. DUTT, JJ. *

Writ Petn. No. 463 of 1986 (Civil), D/-2-5-1986.

Centre of Legal Research and another, Petitioners v. State of Kerala, Respondent.

Constitution of India, Art. 39-A—Legal aid programmes—Public participation is essential—Voluntary organisations or social action groups in this field must be supported by State Government.

BHAGWATI, C.J.: This writ petition raises a question as to whether voluntary organisations or social action groups engaged in the legal aid programme should be supported by the State Government and if so to what extent and under what conditions. There can be no doubt that if the legal aid programme is to succeed it must involve public participation. The State Government undoubtedly has an obligation under Article 39A of the Constitution which embodies a directive principle of State policy to set up a comprehensive and effective legal aid programme in order to ensure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equality. But we have no doubt that despite the sense of social commitment which animates many of our officers in the Administration, no legal aid programme can succeed in reaching the people if its operation remains confined in the hands of the Administration. It is absolutely essential that people should be involved in the legal aid programme because the legal aid programme is not charity or bounty but it is a social entitlement of the people and those in need of legal assistance cannot be looked upon as mere beneficiaries of the legal aid programme but they should be regarded as participants in it. If we want to secure people's participation and involvement in the legal aid programme, we think the best way of securing it is to operate through voluntary organisation and social action groups. These organisations are working amongst the deprived and vulnerable sections of the community at the grassroot level and they know what are the problems and difficulties encountered by these neglected sections of Indian humanity. They have their finger on the pulse of the people and they know from their own experience as to what are the unmet legal needs of the people, what are the sources of exploitation and injustice to the under-privileged segments of society and what measures are necessary to be taken for the purpose of ending such exploitation and

* All India Reporter, Vol. 73, August 1986 (Part 872), pp. 1322-23.

injustice and reaching social or distributive justice to them. We are therefore definitely of the view that voluntary organisations and social action groups must be encouraged and supported by the State in operating the legal aid programme. It is now acknowledged throughout the country that the legal aid programme which is needed for the purpose of reaching social justice to the people cannot afford to remain confined to the traditional or litigation oriented legal aid programme but it must, taking into account the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country, adopt a more dynamic posture and take within its sweep what we may call Aid Schemes or the State Legal Aid and Advice Board, but we may make it clear that such voluntary organisation or social action group shall not be under the control or direction or supervision of the State Government or the State Legal Aid and Advice Board because we take the view that voluntary organisations and social action groups operating these programmes should be totally free from any Governmental Control.

II

AIR 1987 RAJASTHAN 26
S.N. BHARGAVA, J.*

Social Work and Research Centre, Banswara and another, Petitioners
v. State of Rajasthan and others, Respondents.

Civil Writ Petn. No. 710 of 1985, D/-19-12-1985.

Constitution of India, Arts, 39,41, 42, 47 and 226--Directive Principles of State policy--Voluntary organisation set-up to uplift

Tribal people--Funds sanctioned by Government from time to time--Sanction stopped in middle of year--No opportunity given--It is violative of principles of natural justice--Action is also hit by principle of estoppel. [Evidence Act (1872), S.115].

ORDER: Mrs. Srilata Swaminathan, petitioner 2 had sent a letter dated 17th April, 1985 addressed to Justice Mr. G.M. Lodha. Justice Lodha treated that letter as a writ petition and ordered that it should be registered as such. He also admitted the same and ordered that the notices be issued to the State of Rajasthan, Chief Secretary to the Government of Rajasthan, Special Secretary to the Government of Rajasthan (Special Schemes Organisation), Jaipur, Commissioner for Tribal Areas and Director, Social Welfare. Justice Lodha further requested Justice Mr. B.L. Mehta, Chairman, Legal Aid Board to provide financial legal aid by engaging a counsel for this matter.

The Chairman of the Legal Aid Board did not sanction any financial legal aid to the petitioners. Mr. C.K. Garg, Senior Advocate offered his services voluntarily to help the petitioners without charging any fees and so, he was appointed as Amicus Curiae on behalf of the petitioners. Shri C.K. Garg filed a detailed writ petition on 16-7-1985. The respondents were served and they have filed reply of the writ petition on 1st Aug. 1985. A rejoinder has also been filed

* All India Reporter, Vols. 73 and 74, February and March 1987 (Parts 878 and 879), Raj. 26-32, and Raj. 33.

by the petitioners on 19-11-85.

According to the petition, Social Work and Research Centre, hereinafter referred to as the 'Centre' is a voluntary organisation working primarily for the welfare of tribal people residing in remote and backward area known as 'People Khunt' in District Banswara since 1978 with its Project Director, Smt. Srilata Swaminathan, petitioner 2. The main aims and objects of the Centre are to work amongst the tribals in order to solve their socio-economic problems, protect them against exploitation, make them self-sufficient; educate them and to give them a sense of pride in their own culture, heritage and tradition. The details are given in Annx. 2 filed along with the writ petition. The work of the Centre has been appreciated widely by government and non-governmental quarters. The petitioner 2, Project Director of the Centre, has been awarded a three years Fellowship of Rs. 500 per month by Jammalal Bajaj Foundation in the year 1980. A letter of appreciation by the Collector, Banswara, dated 26th January, 1984 has also been annexed with the petition as Annex. 3. The progress report of the Centre for the years 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84 has been annexed with the writ petition as Annex. 4. Micro Project carried on by the Centre has benefited 45 tribal families. Vocational Centre under 'TRYSEM' is also being run for self-employment of tribal women where weaving, spinning and tailoring are being taught. A letter by Smt. Sonia Gandhi, wife of Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi dated Nov 10, 1984, has also been placed on record, which runs as follows:

"Dear Srilata,

Rajiv and I were touched by your words of comfort at our tragic loss. For us she was everything and life without her will just not be the same.

I do remember meeting you. I have heard about your and your husband's work amongst the very poor and I admire you both for it."

The respondent 2 has also placed on record an order of the Supreme Court, dated 13th May, 1985 passed by Hon'ble Justice Mr. P.N. Bhagwati, as he then was, and Justice Rangnath Misra wherein Smt. Srilata Swaminathan was appointed as a Commissioner to visit the Village Vadgan and other two villages to be selected by them and report about the same to the Supreme Court. The petitioner 2 comes from a very respectable family and she is a social activist. She is a Bachelor of Arts and has got four years' experience of Theatre Arts in London. Before taking up this voluntary organisation, she had worked as a Free Lance Director in various Theatre Groups in Delhi as also on Delhi T.V. and Radio programmes.

The State of Rajasthan sanctioned a grant to the Centre for a sum of Rs. 17,750 in the year 1982 for meeting its administrative and functional expenses for conducting the government schemes of helping 50 tribal families through Micro Pilot Project and the Centre was supposed to see that the Micro Pilot Project was rightly implemented and the funds were not wasted or misused and that the benefit of the scheme actually reached the tribal people. The Centre had also been running a non-formal education school for tribal children since 1979. A project report for the grant by the State Government for the school was submitted to the Tribal Commissioner (Annex. 5). Similarly, another project proposal (Annex. 6) for increasing agricultural income for small and marginal tribal farmers was also submitted.

Both these proposals for two years had been sanctioned by the Government vide orders dated 8th Nov. 1983 (Annex. 7 and Annex. 8) for a sum of Rs. 31,350 and Rs. 25,000 respectively. Since the sanction was given sometime in the month of November, 1983, the actual grant for the year 1983-84 in the case of non-formal school project was reduced to Rs. 7,500 and for agricultural project to Rs.14,675. Annexures 9 and 10 are the copies of the sanction in this connection. These grants were received by the Centre and utilisation certificate of the grant received was also submitted to the Government. The Government did not find any fault with the utilisation of the amount sanctioned to the Centre and granted further administrative and financial sanctions for agricultural project for a sum of Rs. 15,675 vide Annex. 11. dated 12-9-84. The Centre in anticipation of receiving the amount had been executing this agricultural project from the very beginning and had been spending money on this account. In spite of the sanction, the grant was not received by the Centre and therefore, the petitioner 2. Smt. Srilata Swaminathan, Project Director of the Centre, wrote a letter to the Commissioner, Tribal Area Development, Udaipur on 5-11-1984 requesting that a cheque for a sum of Rs. 15,675 in view of sanction dated 12-9-84 be sent at an early date and also to release sanction for the other project of non-formal education school which was also being run regularly in view of Annex-8 which was sanctioned for two years, i.e., 1983-84 and 1984-85.

To the petitioners surprise, a letter dated 9-11-84 (Annex. 13) was received enclosing therewith a letter dated 31-10-84 (Annex. 14), informing that the sanction had been cancelled vide government order dated 26-9-1984 (Annex. 26) and that the grant in case of non-formal education centre also could not be released in the light of above mentioned government directions.

The petitioner 2 addressed letters dated 9-11-84 (Annex. 15), again on 28th Nov. 1984 (Annex. 16) and 28th Nov., 1984 (Annex. 17) and 28th Nov., 1984 (Annex. 18) to Tribal Commissioner, Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and Home Commissioner respectively. She addressed yet another letter in January, 1985 (Annex. 19) to the Chief Secretary, Home Commissioner (Annex. 20) and also to the Governor in February, 1985 (Annex. 22) but with no result and hence, she wrote a letter to Hon'ble Judge of this Court which was treated as a writ petition and later, Shri C.K. Garg, Senior Advocate has filed a detailed writ petition in that connection.

The respondents 1 to 4 have filed a very short reply submitting that some assignments relating to tribal area development works and training of rural youth for self-employment (TRYSEM) were given to the petitioner and for those sanctioned work, the grant was also given in full. With regard to the agricultural project, it was submitted that the sanction issued was withdrawn by the State Government by letter dated 31st Oct. 1984 and the petitioners were informed accordingly. As regards non-formal education, it was submitted that this scheme was never sanctioned by the State Government for the year 1984-85, though the grant for the year 1983-84 was released. Similarly, for the third project; TRYSEM, it has been submitted that the scheme was never sanctioned by the State Government and the petitioner was informed by the DRDA, Banswara, by letter dated 23-11-1984 that they should not start the scheme without prior approval of the DRDA and since the DRDA did not approve, the scheme was not sanctioned and hence, no grant could be released to the Centre and the Centre was informed vide letter dated 5-1-85. It has further been

submitted in the reply that since the activities of the petitioner 2 and her husband as per the intelligence reports were found prejudicial to the interest of the State and since the petitioner 2 was practising her designs in the disguise of rural social development activities, the government decided not to give further works to the petitioner Centre. It was further submitted that the grant for social work to the voluntary social organisation is a concession by the government and the petitioners have no vested legal or fundamental right for such grants and therefore, no writ petition is maintainable under Art. 226 of the Constitution. Moreover, the present case cannot be covered by the concept of public interest litigation.

In rejoinder filed by the petitioners, it has been submitted that the grant had been stopped in mala fide manner as the orders were passed for irrelevant and extraneous considerations. The activities of the petitioner 2 have not been specified and in public interest, wide publicity should be given to the activities of the petitioner if there was a grain of truth in Government reply. Orders were passed without affording any opportunity to the petitioners which is in clear violation of the fundamental principles of natural justice and they have also invoked the principle of promissory estoppel and equitable relief.

I have heard Shri C.K. Garg as also Shri M.I. Khan on behalf of the respondents and have also gone through various documents submitted by the parties. The respondents in their reply have not challenged the credentials of petitioner 2 even remotely except that her activities were found prejudicial to the interest of the State and that she was practising her own designs in the disguise of the rural social development activities. The learned Government Advocate has also shown me the original file of the enquiries held by the Government with regard to the activities of petitioner 2 to which a serious objection was taken by learned counsel for the petitioners. He has argued that the Courts should not look into any document unless the petitioners are also given a copy of the same and since the government has not claimed any privilege with regard to these documents, the petitioners should be supplied a copy of those documents. I do not think it necessary to dwell upon this objection as the documents shown to me were of secret nature and have no bearing on the merits of the case. It is true that a formal application claiming privilege has not been filed, but I do not think it necessary to ask the Government to give copy of these reports to the petitioners as the writ petition can be decided even without going through the file as it has no bearing on the merits of the case. The Centre was registered as early as in the year 1972 vide Annex. 1. Annexure 2 has given in detail about the programme and the aims of the tribal development project under the signatures of Project Director, petitioner 2 in June 1978. It is not denied that the petitioners have been carrying on tribal development work in the area and the Collector, Banswara gave a Commendation Certificate to petitioner 2, on 26th Jan., 1984 for the social work which she was doing in the tribal area for public awareness. The petitioners had been carrying on their activities particularly in Peepal Khunt, District Banswara since 1981 as per the progress report Annex. 4 dated 20th July 1984. The petitioner 2 submitted a project proposal for non-formal education school in Village Chantali, District Banswara (Rajasthan) in February, 1983 vide Annex. 5 mentioning therein that the activities were started

since November, 1978 with a view to helping the tribals for their social upliftment and to make them more self-reliant and aware. Since the rate of literacy was very low in the tribal areas and most children do not go to the school as they are expected to help and support their parents for their livelihood, therefore, they started a school for a non-formal education in 1979 which is being run regularly in spite of many odds. A grant of Rs. 37,500 was sought for three years vide Annex. 5. The non-petitioner 2 submitted another project proposal for increasing agricultural income for small and marginal tribal farmers and demanded a sum of Rs. 48,025 for three years. The district administration recommended both these projects and therefore, the Commissioner, Tribal Area Development, Udaipur issued administrative as well as financial sanctions vide notification dated 8-11-83 (Annex. 7), accepting the project for two years 1983-84 and 1984-85, amounting to Rs. 31,350 in all for agricultural project, whereas it also accorded sanction for spending a sum of Rs. 14,675 during the year 1983-84 and the conditions imposed for this sanction read as under:

(Matter in vernacular omitted--Ed.)

Similarly, Commissioner, Tribal Area Development, Udaipur vide Annex. 8, gave administrative as well as financial sanction for both the years 1983-84 and 1984-85 for non-formal education scheme amounting to Rs. 25,000 in all, but for the year 1983-84, only a sum of Rs. 7,500 was sanctioned and similar conditions were imposed and in pursuance of these sanctions, demand, drafts for Rs. 14,675 and Rs. 7,500 were sent to the petitioners vide Annexures 9 and 10. 12-9-1984, Commissioner, Tribal Area Development, Udaipur in pursuance of earlier sanction dated 8-11-1983 (Annex. 8) issued administrative and financial sanction for a sum of Rs. 15,675 for the year 1984-85 vide Annex. 11. The petitioner 2 vide letter dated 5th Nov., 1984 (Annex. 12) requested the Commissioner, Tribal Area Development for releasing the amount of Rs. 15,675 for the agricultural project and also for the non-formal education scheme as they were running both these projects since April, 1984, to which a reply was received by non-petitioner 2 vide letter dated 9-11-84 (Annex. 13) enclosing therewith a copy of the order dated 31st Oct., 1984 (Annexure 14) by the Commissioner, TAD cancelling the sanction issued on 12-9-84 in pursuance of the order received from the Government, dated 26-9-84. Thereafter, petitioner 2 addressed several letters to various authorities including the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, Home Secretary and the Governor, but with no result and ultimately, the petitioner 2 wrote a letter to a Judge of this Court for redress.

Under the assurances received from the authorities and in view of the sanctions Annex. 7 and 8, the petitioners had been carrying both the projects right from April, 1984. It was for the first time that the petitioners were told by letter dated 5-11-1984 that the sanction accorded on 12-9-1984 for a sum of Rs. 15,675 has been cancelled and State Government does not want to give any grant on account of non-formal education scheme. We are sovereign, socialist, secular democratic republic and are governed by a written constitution to secure to all its citizens justice, social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; and equality of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and

integrity of the nation. The Constitution provides and guarantees fundamental rights in Part III of the Constitution, providing certain fundamental rights with regard to property, religion, speech, equality before law, etc., whereas Part IV of the Constitution describes the directive principles of State policy which are fundamental guides for the governance of the country and it is the duty of the State to comply these principles while governing the country. Art. 38 of the Constitution enjoins upon the State to secure a social order for the promotion of the welfare of the people. Art 38 of the Constitution, sub-cl. (2) was added by 44th Amendment Act of 1978 requiring the State to strive to minimise the inequalities in income and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities not only amongst individuals but also among groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations. Art. 39 enjoins upon the State to direct its policy towards securing--

- (a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood;
- (b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good;
- (c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment;
- (d) that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women;
- (e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength.

Article 41 of the Constitution provides as under:

"The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of underserved want."

Article 42 of our Constitution enjoins upon the State to make provision for securing just humane conditions of work and for maternity relief and Art. 45 of our Constitution provides that the State should provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years and Art. 46 specifically provides that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Art. 47 of the Constitution enjoins duty on the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.

All these activities of the State cannot be run by the Government alone and therefore, Government, leaders and the Planning Commission have been emphasising the importance of role of voluntary organisations like the petitioner Centre. In fact, useful implementation of any government plan without the aid and assistance of such voluntary organisations is not feasible and, therefore, both the Central as well

as the State Government encourage people to involve themselves in the social, economic and welfare programmes, including removal of illiteracy and economic development specially amongst the tribal areas and other backward and weaker sections in the society.

In the present case, it has not been disputed by the Government that the petitioners have been carrying on their activities in the area since 1978 and have also opened a non-formal education school since 1979 in which children of the tribal people have been getting education. It has also not been contested that the petitioners have been carrying on these projects during the financial year 1984-85 or that they have violated any of the conditions mentioned in Annex. 7 or Annex. 8. It has also not been disputed that the petitioners were awarded sanction for work done by them in the year 1983-84 both for agricultural project as well as for non-formal education scheme. Since it is a continuous process, the petitioners were fully justified in carrying on their activities both for agricultural project as well as for non-formal education scheme in view of sanction (Annexs. 7 and 8) and if the government wanted to discontinue their sanction, it should have informed the petitioners in the beginning of the financial year of 1984 well in advance so that they could decide whether they will like to continue their activities even in absence of the grant to be received from the Government. The very fact that the petitioners had submitted the utilisation certificate of both the schemes for the year 1983-84 and that they have not breached any of the conditions mentioned in Annexs. 7 or 8, clearly entitles them to receive grant for both the schemes for the year 1984-85. Even the Commissioner, T.A.D. Udaipur vide its order (Annex. 11) sanctioned a sum of Rs. 15,675 on account of agricultural project for the year 1984-85. It has not been brought on record as to what happened between 12-9-1984 and 26-9-84 when the Home (Gr.5) Department vide Annex. 26 directed that the activities of the petitioners should not be encouraged and no further government aid should be given to them. Even after filing of the writ petition, the State Government has only submitted that as per the intelligence reports, the activities of the petitioner 2 and her husband were found prejudicial to the interest of the State and that the petitioner 2 was practising her designs in the disguise of the rural social development activities. These are all vague allegations and no concrete example or instance has been brought on record. Moreover, the principle of promissory estoppel and also equitable rights apply in the present case. The petitioners under the impression and bona fide belief that the Commissioner, TAD has already issued to them administrative as well as financial sanction for both the projects (vide Annexs. 7 and 8) continued their activities. It will not be fair and just to stop the grants in the middle of the financial year when the petitioners have been carrying on both these projects right from April 1984. Such actions by the Government will not only discourage the social voluntary organisations who are helping the government in carrying on their plans and schemes in pursuance of the directive principles laid down in our Constitution.

Learned counsel for the petitioners in this connection has placed reliance on *Amratlal Ramanlal v. State of Gujarat*, AIR 1972 Guj. 260 and *Union of India v. M/s. Anglo Afghan Agencies*, AIR 1968 SC 718. It is true that the petitioners have no legal right or fundamental right to receive such grants nor there is any violation of its any statute, Act or the Rule as there are no Rules governing such grants

by the State and it is purely discretionary but the Court cannot close its eyes and it is now too late to contend that the High Court should not interfere in writ jurisdiction under Art. 226 of the Constitution unless there is violation of any legal or fundamental right. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in a number of cases has enjoined a duty on the High Court to see that the State Government functions in accordance with the principles of natural justice and acts fairly and in a just manner while passing its administrative or discretionary orders. In the present case, the petitioners were never given an opportunity to show cause as to why the grant should be stopped and the amount should not be released. If there was anything against the petitioners, it should have been brought to their notice before cancelling the grant and thus there is a clear violation of the basic fundamental principle of natural justice as well. When the grants were sanctioned and more so when the petitioners continued their activities in the earlier years for which the grant was released and they were continuing their activities for the year 1984-85 under the bona fide belief that the grants would be released in due course, it will be most unfair and unjust on the part of the government to cancel the sanctioned grant or not to release the grants for these projects.

In this view of the matter, I am inclined to allow this writ petition and direct that an amount of Rs. 15,675 on account of agricultural project for the year 1984-85 should be released forthwith and the order dated 31-10-84 (Annex. 14) is hereby quashed. The petitioners are also entitled to a sum of Rs. 12,500 i.e. 50 per cent of the amount sanctioned vide Annex. 8 for the year 1984-85 on account of non-formal education scheme which the petitioners had been carrying on even during the year 1984-85.

In the result, the writ petition is allowed without any order as to costs.

Petition allowed.

Are we on the Right Track ? Report of a Workshop on Participatory Evaluation*

(Extracts from an evaluation conducted by Abha Bhaiya, Arun Roy, Datta Savale, Kamla Bhasin, M. Kurian, M.V. Shastri and Vikas Bhai; written by Kamala Bhasin and brought out by FAO-FFHC/AD, 1987.)

DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT approaches and strategies require different kinds of evaluation methods and techniques. If development projects are top-down, started by people from outside the community (governmental or non-governmental organizations or agencies) to provide services like health, education, etc., and to bring about certain changes in production methods and techniques, then the local people are merely recipients, targets or objects of development. People for whom development is supposedly intended have little or no say in the content and direction of such efforts. With hindsight it can be said that top-down, centralized development projects seldom help the really poor and needy because the real causes of poverty are left unquestioned and unchallenged. The evaluation of such projects is also, quite logically, top-down, geared and done by the decision-makers without any participation of the local people. Those from whom information and opinions are gathered, are not even informed about the evaluation outcome. In fact, often even the project holders have no say. For them, more often than not, evaluation is like an inspection being carried out by outsiders at the insistence of funding agencies, and they feel threatened by it. The main purpose of such an evaluation is clearly one of financial accountability, and emphasis is on physical targets. Because this model of development does not insist on starting a process of consciousness-raising, increasing awareness and mobilization, little attention is paid to the assessment of intangibles such as people's participation, the decision-making process, level of awareness, practice of democracy, etc.

Development, however, can also be understood as a means of helping the poor to collectively analyse the socio-economic, political and cultural structures which keep them poor and getting organized to challenge these structures. In such a development model, the oppressed people are seen as subjects, not merely objects of their own development. The programme is a partnership between the local masses and outsiders. Its strength is concomitant with that of the people's organizations (POs) which emerge, their democratic functioning and the actions they take to tilt the balance of power and resources in favour of the exploited masses. The evaluation of such efforts for development and organization has a different purpose and demands other methods, techniques and indicators.

* Freedom from Hunger Campaign/Action for Development, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, New Delhi.

We who met in Secunderabad were interested only in the evaluation of the second type of development efforts. All of us felt that although a large number of action groups (AGs) are now concentrating on the mobilization and organization of the poor, there is little clarity on how these efforts should be assessed. The purpose of our talks was to achieve some common understanding on the basis of the experience and ideas we all had on evaluation.

Some Important Considerations

We agreed that the evaluation of people-centred and people-oriented efforts at consciousness-raising, mobilization, organization and action should consider the following points:

Evaluation is Reflection on Action

Evaluation, as we see it, is collective reflection on the actions taken by individuals within a group and the group itself and the methods of functioning of a group. Its purpose is improvement both in the understanding and analysis of reality and issues, and in future action. Thus seen, it is an important method of group education and learning.

In-Built and On-Going Evaluation

For a group interested in improving not only the socio-economic position of the poor, but also the methods of functioning and the understanding of everyone involved in the work, evaluation has to be in-built and on-going. Reflection based on concrete information has to be closely linked to action. In addition to on-going evaluation, at the end of one or two years, there can be an overall, time-bound evaluation which is a cumulative assessment of what has taken place over a period of time.

The experience of CROSS shared by M. Kurian illustrated very well the method and importance of on-going evaluation and its culmination into an annual exercise. The village Sanghams (Small, face-to-face groups of rural poor) initiated by CROSS assess their activities and the performance of the functionaries every month. In addition, they assess every major action under taken by them. Evaluation sessions are also organized every three months at the cluster and area level. Apart from these evaluations by the local people, CROSS staff meets once a month to take stock of its activities and methods of functioning. Annual self-evaluation is done in January of every year.

Emphasis on Self-Evaluation

The emphasis of a people-centred and people-oriented programme or organization has to be on self-evaluation in which the people and the organizers not only participate, but also decide about its parameters, form, and methods. The final judges of a programme's effectiveness must be the people themselves.

Evaluation of Tangibles, Intangibles and Processes

If the objectives of development are both tangibles (like improved economic status, improved health) and intangibles (like increased awareness, people's participation and democratic decision-making) then obviously evaluation must also focus on both these aspects. There are techniques available for assessing tangibles which can be used, but we need to develop methods and indicators as far as

intangibles and processes are concerned.

The process a group goes through to reach decisions and act is as important as the outcome of the action. We have to understand how people move towards the achievement of their objectives. It is necessary to understand how the processes with POs and AGs are related to general processes in society, and how they affect each other. Their context has to be understood.

Just as there is a close relationship between action and reflection, theory and practice, there is also one between tangible objectives, like increased access to land or higher wages and intangible ones like improved level of awareness and strength of POs. Ideally the achievement of one should lead to improvement of the other.

POs might be fighting for economic benefits but unlike the usual development projects POs emphasize the processes and use each struggle to educate and strengthen themselves. After achieving some small victories, POs cannot sit quietly and smugly, but need to constantly ask how much space has been created by a campaign and how that space should be used for future action. For them, the process of structural change should be an on-going one which does not stop at any particular point. This is different from target-bound projects, considered terminated on completion of a certain number of wells, the installation of pump sets, biogas, etc.

False Dichotomy between Consciousness-Raising and Economic Development

When the entire emphasis of development programmes is on material development, quantitative analysis is primary. But when the emphasis of development efforts is on the growth of people and their organization, qualitative analysis assumes more importance. Because material development and the development of people's consciousness and their organization does (and must) go together, quantitative and qualitative analysis cannot be exclusive of each other. Some groups take an extreme position and reject all quantitative data and measurement of material development. They talk only of intangibles like consciousness-raising, increasing the level of awareness, etc. We felt a need to have a good synthesis of evaluating tangibles and intangibles, quantitative and qualitative results. If one is working with the really poor their material conditions have to be improved fast (mainly of course through their own efforts). The poor are not going to be interested in consciousness-raising for its own sake. All consciousness-raising must lead to an improvement in their material conditions and vice versa. In fact this dichotomy between organizational work and programmes for economic development is false and misleading. Groups primarily doing organizational work also improve the economic status of the poor at least as much, if not more, as the so-called projects for income generation do. Organizations like Bhoomi Sena, Shramik Sangathan and CROSS, have led to tremendous economic benefits for the poor through their struggle for recovering alienated lands, higher wages, employment opportunities, lowering interest rates, fighting corruption, reducing the power of middlemen, etc. The economic position of the poor can be improved by removing scarcity and exploitation and, if these two tasks go on simultaneously, it is of course ideal.

The attempts of organizing the poor also improve their receiving mechanism and bargaining power, and thereby enable them to make increased use of government schemes, bank loans, etc. To recapitulate, economic development and people's organizations and action are--and should be--dialectically related. Every struggle by the oppressed should create more space for their economic development and their improved economic status should in turn strengthen their organisation.

Need to Look at Three Kinds of Processes

We need to evaluate processes in three areas or realities, and also to look at the interplay between these three:

1. The ACs reality and the processes within it.
2. The community with which the AG is working and the processes with in the community.
3. The larger socio-economic and political reality in which both AGs and oppressed communities are situated.

It is important to analyse and understand why some people form an AG, why they want to relate to a certain oppressed community, what their perception of the larger reality and structures is, what conception of change they have, and what their goals and aspirations are. Is there any homogeneity between the aspirations and understanding of the AGs and those of the community with which they work? How realistic are the objectives set by them in the context of opposition forces?

Interplay of Aspirations and Reality

It is also important to look at the objectives and aspirations of AGs and POs in the context of the forces of reality. We have to see the dynamics between both. The reality exists and operates independently of aspirations of AGs and POs who intervene to change it according to their own understanding. So we must understand the totality of the forces of society and see what the intervention has succeeded in achieving.

Not only is there need to assess the extent to which the objectives and aspirations have been achieved, but they, themselves, have to be constantly reviewed and readjusted according to changing reality, and the changes in AGs and POs understanding. We need methods and tools to assess the AGs and POs goals in the context of their aspirations and hypothesis, and of the larger reality.

It is only when action is taken after a systematic analysis of the overall situation and reality that it becomes meaningful and effective. For example, if one does community theatre without understanding the context and if it is not related to any action, it provides at best some entertainment. People's theatre can inspire and lead to action only if done with a perception of reality and needs and aspirations of the masses. When divorced from POs and from action, theatre, non-formal education or consciousness-raising efforts are uninspiring, uninnovative and lead to no change in the oppressive situation and structures.

The Role of Outsiders in Self-Evaluation

Emphasis on self-evaluation does not mean that we took the extreme position that local people and AGs can assess their work themselves. We recognized that every perception has its limitations. Just as outsiders' perception might be limited because of their lack of knowledge and acquaintance with local realities, local people's perception might be limited because of their particularity. The interaction of perceptions and views (both of insiders and outsiders) can therefore be very beneficial.

The presence of an experienced and sensitive outsider can encourage the group to formulate and articulate its thoughts more systematically and objectively. A sensitive outsider can enrich the discussions by bringing in other experiences, perceptions, perspectives and dimensions. There can be areas which local people either forget to look at, or do not want to look at. It is the outsiders' role to bring these forgotten elements or reality into discussion, however unpleasant this might be. Local people and AGs have to be helped to realize that unpleasant facts cannot be wished away. An outsider plays an important role by asking the right kind of questions and providing useful insights for dealing with dilemmas and uncertainties.

Only those outsiders can play this role effectively who are actually insiders in more than one way. They have to be known and acceptable to the people who are assessing themselves, should identify with the group's objectives, and be involved in the same kinds of struggles and processes although in another area or at a different level. Insofar as they are involved and have a commitment to the same goals, they are not 'objective' and 'unbiased' observers and evaluators; but for that matter have there even been 'objective' evaluators? Has not the myth of evaluation being objective, been exploded?

For helping in assessing various aspects of work we might need different kinds of outsiders, e.g., someone acquainted with health issues when it is about a community health programme.

It must be remembered that an insensitive outsider can ruin all efforts at a genuine self-evaluation; instead of leading to a common understanding she/he can further divide the people and generally harm the organization and action.

In order to be effective an outsider has to prepare her/himself thoroughly gathering whatever information is available about the organizations and the local and natural realities within which they are operating and which they want to change through their interaction.

It was pointed out that AGs can also help each other in their self-evaluation. The same is possible between communities and groups. Experienced members of one group can help others in their self-evaluation. Such interaction strengthens the links between different groups and thus increases their joint strength.

Self-Evaluation only Possible if the AG is Ready for it

It was stated that all AGs do not recognize the need for an honest self-evaluation. Some of them consider it a waste of time. They want to get along with action and see reflection as separate from it. For them reflection is unnecessary theorizing which delays action. Of course, when taken to an extreme kind of 'hair-splitting', reflection can indeed delay action, in fact at times becomes its substitute. But it is absolutely necessary (in right measures), especially to avoid the other extremes of activism.

Some AGs might recognize the need for self-evaluation but might not be ready for it as it analyses all aspects of work and relationships and this can be a very painful process, especially in the beginning. It requires a certain self-confidence, the ability to look at oneself critically, and to listen to criticism without getting defensive or aggressive.

It is only when at least some members of the AG recognize the need for a self-evaluation that its process can be started. As the latter goes on, other members might also recognize its usefulness and importance and join it.

SELF-EVALUATION: AN ILLUSTRATION

Aruna Roy shared with us the experience of her group (SWRC) of a self-evaluation process. Her case study shows how through it changes took place in their understanding and analysis of the reality around them, and their own role vis-a-vis this reality.

SWRC started work in 1972. Initially it was primarily a group of professionals trying to provide technical and managerial solutions to the problem of poverty and injustice. At that time SWRC did not work exclusively with the poor, nor did it have their organization as its objective. In the course of the first three to four years some questions cropped up in some of the workers' minds about the larger reality, the community with which the AG should work, the adequacy of technical solutions, the role of professionals, etc. This questioning by individuals within the AG led to some creative tension and changes in the work but for another two years there was neither a collective questioning nor a clearly expressed need for evaluation. In 1978, 8 to 10 members started to concretize the issues and a debate began within the group on the need for self-questioning. This small group started meeting informally to formulate the questions which were in their minds. They reflected on all issues bothering them, and on the relationship of this questioning with their understanding, their work and local reality. They also identified problems in the following areas of their work and group functioning:

- communication within the AG itself and between its members and local people;
- different kinds of inequalities and differences in status within the AG;
- concentration of decision-making in a few hands and need to create structures which would ensure broader participation and reduce the exercise of informal power;

-- place of economic development and its relationship with politics, social change, etc.

The group small at the beginning gradually expanded to reach 18 to 20 members. They once sat almost every day for about six weeks during which their own work was more or less suspended. This activity was not seen very favourably by some other AG members but they did not object to it. Watching cautiously, they even joined some of the sessions but distrustingly! The ball which was set rolling moved on. Later a group of 40 had two 4-day long sessions with 8 outsiders well known to them and who, it was felt, would be able to help them deal with certain dilemmas faced and questions they had in mind regarding the nature and direction of their work, the role of an institution like theirs, development programmes v/s organization, etc.

There was a tremendous heterogeneity amongst the members who got together in terms of their social and educational background, understanding and articulation of issues, commitment to change, etc. The pace of discussion was therefore slow and everyone did not participate equally.

The kinds of questions raised and answers attempted at are given here in Aruna's own words: "We demanded openness and ability to discuss even personal commitments and aspirations. We broke the barriers between our professional and personal lives. We realized that our objectives had been too general. We narrowed them down. We decided we should work mainly with the poor. We formulated a decision-making process which was participatory. We wanted a forum in which every worker could effectively take part. We decided we should evaluate ourselves (our attitude, behaviour, understanding) once a year--how honest are we, how democratic, how open, how caste-minded? What is our understanding of issues? We discussed questions like what is more important for a worker--a Ph.D. or a capacity to communicate with people and elicit people's participation? But this process of personal evaluation when related to salary structures was not very successful. Subjective factors played too important a role and did not allow for the personal evaluation to become operational in relation to judgements by peers on one another's salaries. This power was vested by the groups of its Director, accepting its own failure:

Also at the Village level we had talks with people who had participated in our programmes. We met them at one of the five field centres once a month on the new moon day and reviewed the various programmes. Meetings were sometimes held with special interest or programme groups like crafts group, health groups, etc.

We concluded that there was a role for an institution like ours. We discussed its role in development. 'agitation', in trying to bring about structural changes. We also discussed whether it was possible for a development group like this to shift gear and go into organizational activity. Some felt it could be done, others that it could not, and should not.

The long talks obviously led to several changes in their work, in

the decision-making process and pattern and in interpersonal relationships. These changes led to the need for more discussion and clarity. In the end a dialectical relationship seems to have been established between action and reflection, theory and practice.

Perceived Advantages of Self-Evaluation

According to Aruna these self-evaluation sessions were extremely useful. At the end of it all, most participants realized that this kind of communication and openness is necessary for improving a group's effectiveness and impact.

Self-evaluation can help everyone to think and learn collectively, to articulate better. If carried on sensitively, it can make every participant more honest, sensitive, analytical and open to change. It changes everybody's awareness and consciousness as well as people's attitudes and helps them to cope better with conflicts.

Self-evaluation can improve a group's inner functioning by creating better relationships between the different AG members. Open discussion on certain issues removes unnecessary misunderstandings. By talking frankly, even about sensitive issues, people begin to see and appreciate other's viewpoints.

Self-evaluation helps in evolving a common perspective, a shared commitment to action and thus transforms a loose group of individuals into a cohesive and effective AG. The analysis of the group improves, it understands better larger realities and the interaction of its work with them. By making members critically conscious of their actions, it improves both a group's inner functioning and the work it does with people. According to Aruna, "an attempt to resolve our own dilemmas and conflicts led to greater clarity".

Such a process alters the relationships within the group and the relationship of the AG with the people. Because the AG becomes a cohesive group and develops a certain focus, AG members do not say different things about their work and this improves the AG's image vis-a-vis the people. The misunderstanding or confusion which people might have about the AG's role, real motivation, etc., are reduced when it develops an open dialogue with local people and also involves them in the assessment of the work it initiated.

Systematic self-evaluation requires that the AGs develop methods of gathering and documenting information, and conducting free interaction and discussions, and keeping records of these. AGs also have to look for indicators of consciousness and articulation. Because of all these conscious efforts at evaluation the AGs work improves. In addition to the improvement in the above-mentioned areas, which are mainly intangible, experience shows that self-evaluation also improves the achievement of tangible results. This happens because action becomes much more relevant, conscious and focused. As part of their self-evaluation, SWRC also did quantitative analysis and found that the former had led to better tangible results. (This was also Kurian's experience in CROSS).

Some Examples of Bad External Evaluations

We also heard examples of some bad external evaluations conducted

by social scientists and rural development and management experts, using the latest cost-benefit and social cost-benefit analysis. In order to get a good analysis of their work, CROSS got an evaluation done by a well-known organization. At the end of the elaborate questionnairing, data collecting and processing, what CROSS got was merely a description of its work without any analysis. The evaluation failed to provide any guidelines for future action which was the main purpose of having it done and ended up giving CROSS a very good chit and a substantial bill.

Similarly some management people had gone to SWRC to conduct social cost-benefit analysis and its outcome was in no way helpful either, at least not to the AG and local people.

The sharing of these experiences made us realize that there are no ready made 'scientific' tools available for the evaluation of efforts to conscientize and mobilize people. Established academic institutions cannot, for obvious reasons, be expected to provide the necessary help in this matter. AGs and mass organizations together with some sensitive academics will have to evolve methods and tools for assessing their work.

II

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING SELF-EVALUATION

Evaluation to be effective, needs to find its place within a well planned action programme. The starting point of any development action is a baseline survey of the socio-economic conditions of the community as well as of the perceptions and understanding of the people. Such a survey is to be done both by the Action Group (AG) and the local community.

Before starting work in a village, CROSS (the Comprehensive Rural Operations Service Society in Hyderabad) holds, what they call, perception meetings. The community with whom CROSS plans to work sits together, surveys the problems of the village and analyzes its situation. Who owns how much land, what are the various occupational groups, who determines prices and wages, what is the relationship between the different groups? The picture which emerges is drawn in the form of charts and put up in the community centre. The success of future action is then measured against this picture.

When the objectives are left vague, it is difficult to evaluate them. It is, therefore, important that the AGs and people's organization, (POs) define their objectives and spell out indicators to assess them in concrete and quantifiable terms. Some groups, for example, start their work only by saying they want to raise people's consciousness, without stating, how, once raised, it will be related to action and measured. This of course makes the evaluation exercise difficult.

AREAS OF EVALUATION

The following are the broad areas which need to be evaluated.

Changes in Material Conditions

As the most important concern of the rural poor is the betterment of their material situation, the AGs and POs must assess whether, how and to what extent their intervention has improved the economic conditions of the community with which they are working. While doing this, they will have to distinguish between changes which occur as a result of their intervention and changes which occur because of other factors like industrialization, breaking up of the feudal system, government programmes, etc. Following are the main areas in which material changes can be brought about.

Employment and Wages

Has the number of days in a year for which women and men get work increased? Have alternative job opportunities for women and men been created as a result of the pressure exercised, e.g., Employment Guarantee Scheme and Food for Work programme? Has the occupational pattern changed? Has the wage rate for both women and men gone up for regular and seasonal work? Have women started getting equal wages with men? Has the relationship between employers and employees changed? Has the pattern of migration shifted? If there are bonded labourers in the area, how has their condition changed? What impact have changes in employment had on the leisure time of women and men?

Ownership of Means of Production, Access to Resources and their Use

Do the people own more land, ploughs, bullocks, milch cattle and implements? Do they possess more irrigation facilities or have better access to them? Has the cropping pattern shifted? Are more cash crops being grown? Has the area under the food crops increased or decreased?

Access to Forest, Fodder, Fuel

Questions regarding the state of forestry and access to forest produce are very important for the tribal areas. Increased or reduced access to forest produce will give an idea of a change in their economic condition.

Credit

Has indebtedness decreased? Have there been changes in pawning or mortgage? Has the interest rate gone down? Is there a change in the repayment method? Do people have better access to institutional credit?

Terms of Trade and Relationship with Markets

Are people getting higher prices for what they sell? Are they buying at lower prices? Are crafts people and artisans buying their own raw material? Has women's involvement in marketing increased or decreased?

Analysis of Provision Stores and Consumption Patterns

Is the local ration shop functioning better? What items are being bought and sold more? Has the sale of essentials like food, cloth, increased or is it liquor, transistors, watches which are being sold more?

Food Intake and Health

Are men, women and children eating better? Have the nutrition

levels improved? Is there a change in the pattern of diseases? Has infant mortality gone down?

Clothing and Shelter

Are people better dressed? Has housing improved?

As can be seen, questions related to women and other especially disadvantaged groups should be integrated into the the design of all evaluation.

The above criteria permit to gauge changes not only in material conditions but also in economic relationships between different groups and the economic structure of the area. In acutely poverty stricken areas, where the task of reducing poverty is a matter of urgency, such criteria are of special relevance. At the same time other criteria should be used to assess the quality of life, e.g., are people more human? Do they have more, leisure? Are they more self-reliant? Are they taking more decisions about their own lives?

Alternative Economic Ventures

Sometimes in addition to getting a better deal for the rural poor in their existing economic activities and roles, AGs and POs start some new ventures like collective farms, poultry, joint marketing, handicrafts production, etc. Their purpose might be to help local people produce more, or to remove middlemen, or to raise resources for the survival of the group. If these economic projects are run along the usual capitalist lines (and they normally are), then they might defeat the very purpose of the existence of such AGs and POs. Therefore their running is to be very carefully examined. The economic projects undertaken should be experiments in alternative ways of organizing production and marketing, and a tool for strengthening POs rather than weakening them. The methods used should be liberating rather than enslaving. The management model used will be an essential criterion for the evaluation of such projects.

Some AGs for example, have started consumer stores to escape from the middlemen. It is necessary to define the role of such stores, to review what items should be sold, the amount of profit to be charged, the use to which it should be put or the way it should be distributed.

Mobilisation and Organisation

Another area that needs to be evaluated is the strength and functioning of the people's groups and organizations which might have emerged as a result of the intervention of the action group. Before enumerating the indicators, we discussed some important general points regarding organizing people which the AGs should be aware of and discuss among themselves.

All those involved with removing injustices in present-day society through the organization of the people have to remember that the world we live in is fast evolving. Feudal relationships are being replaced by capitalist relationship; capitalism itself is constantly changing its face. In a country like India, different kinds of social and economic structures co-exist, at the same point of time, even in the same geographical area. In such a fluid situation AGs always need to review and revise their understanding and analysis of

the socio-economic context in which they are working; to adjust accordingly their objectives and the issues around which they organize people.

For instance, earlier (and even now in most poor areas) scarcity and material deprivation were seen to be the main problem. People were organized around economic issues like employment, wages, higher prices, etc. But with the advancement of capitalism, alienation also became an important issue. Production is no longer for local consumption only, it is directed at markets located further and further away. In this process, workers are getting dehumanized. This dehumanization and its various dimensions need to be understood. Exploitation can no longer be described only in material and economic terms; its psychological and cultural aspects have also to be considered and dealt with.

While the poor suffer more from scarcity, the middle class is suffering from alienation. Both these issues need to be understood and their interrelationships soon. For example many AG members from the middle class are disillusioned with the system, cut off from their own social and cultural background and at times unable to find a place for themselves. Many of them become activists not because of the suffering caused by scarcity but because of the pinch of alienation. Development agents as well as the people must realize that it is the same system which produces scarcity and alienation; therefore, opposing this system is in the interest of both the middle class and the materially deprived people. The prevalent notion that the middle class activists are fighting the battles of the poor which are not their own, is therefore wrong.

Issue-Oriented Organizations

In industrialized societies and industrialized sectors of the Third World there are other issues that also, sooner or later, need to be looked into. In more and more societies, for example, human beings are being exploited not only as producers (alienation from their own products) but also as consumers. Others decide not only what is to be produced but also what people should consume. The omnipresent advertisement industry is fast paralyzing human beings as consumers. People are losing control over their own choices. They now believe that they cannot exist without a television, a car, a telephone, etc. What we consume is becoming more important than what we are. Soon people will have to recognize that they have to get organized not only as producers but also as consumers.

The difference between blue collar and white collar work and workers is also getting blurred. Both these workers are becoming alienated. New kind of relationships and alliances might be necessary between them.

Other issues such as environment and ecology, human rights and peace are similarly becoming important. AGs need to develop a perspective on all of them, both in their specificity and in their inter-relationships.

While discussing these issues we knew that many of them are not urgent in the context of the work with the rural poor, yet we put them on record to emphasize and illustrate the changing nature of

reality, hence the changing rationale for organization and the need for constant review.

In countries where the majority of people live below the poverty line, economic issues continue to be of primary importance, but simultaneously other important issues also have to be taken up, such as human rights, or the attack on the survival and lifestyles of certain categories of people through deforestation schemes or mechanization of fisheries. Organizing women on women-related questions is also important because women suffer also because of the patriarchal value system and the attitudes it has towards women.

Health and education are two other very important issues on which people are being organized. The existing health and education systems need to be considerably changed if they are to be relevant for the vast majority. The question is not only to help people gain access to the existing systems but also to create alternative systems of health and education. Special attention has to be paid to the specific needs and concerns of women in the areas of health and education.

Some Indicators to Evaluate the Strength of People's Organizations

The following are some simple indicators to assess POs strength and inner functioning:

- Number and composition of people's groups or organisations formed. Is their number increasing?
- Number of members (women/men). What percentage are members compared to the total number of poor in the area? Have some members left the groups? If yes, for what reasons? Was the matter discussed in their group?
- How many members (women/men) share responsibility in running the group?
- Number of and attendance (by women/men) at meetings? How do they participate in discussions? What are the issues discussed and the level of the talks? Are members becoming more articulate?
- Are issues of specific concern to women being taken up?
- What actions or struggles have the groups taken?
- Have the groups undertaken joint economic activities?
- Is there any interaction between different groups? On what issues? Is this interaction increasing?

Democratic Functioning

Another important area to be evaluated is the inner functioning of AGs and POs. It is difficult to have precise indicators for this but some significant aspects can and should be looked into.

The composition of the AG and PO can be quite revealing. How many AG members are outsiders and how many local? What is their class background? How many are women and what are their role and activities? What is their motivation for getting involved in such work?

One can judge the effectiveness and honesty of an AG by looking at interpersonal relationships, as well as leadership and decision-making patterns which exist within it. It is important to ask who

takes major decisions and how. Do the majority of people have any say in decision making? Who decides which issues should be taken up for mobilization and organization? Who negotiates with the local community and who motivates it into action? Who mobilizes the necessary resources for the work? Who does correspondence and documentation? Another question which may be asked is--what relationship do these functions have to power and position within the AG?

The leadership pattern can reveal the nature of a group. Is there one leader or a small clique which has been ruling for ever and ever? Is there a second line of leadership? Are the present leaders replaceable? How is the question of succession dealt with? It is impossible to think of some AGs and POs without their present leaders as there is no second line of leadership which can take over the organization when the time comes. It is interesting and revealing to see how these groups deal with the void created by the departure of a charismatic leader.

It is important to ask these questions, as AGs who talk about democracy, decentralization, etc., also need to experiment with and practice these concepts.

The question of democratic functioning is not, however, a very simple one. There is often a contradiction between democratic functioning and team discipline. On the one hand, it is good for activists to be critical, open, aware and, on the other hand, it is necessary for all of them to work with discipline in order to have a common thrust and to take quick decisions. A fair balance has to be struck between these two tendencies, a balance which makes the group more effective. The final proof of a good group should be the action it takes and its actual impact on local people and realities.

Another way of judging a group is to find out how an AG or PO deals with dissent. Here, more than the outcome, it is the process which is revealing. Through discussions one can find out how the group looks at its own problems and weaknesses. Groups talking about them are obviously more open, willing to learn and to change.

To judge the seriousness and purposefulness of a group one could see what issues are taken up for discussion in their regular meetings. Are they about their work, its relationship with the larger reality or are the people preoccupied with their own personal problems, salaries, comforts, interpersonal feuds, etc?

AGs professing to value equality, democracy, sharing definitely have to try to practice these concepts. Another way of judging a group, therefore, is to see to what extent and how it is striving to pursue these ideals: through reducing inequalities in salaries, facilities, perks and lifestyles. It is also necessary to understand how the AG perceives these issues: as values to guide one's action, as part of the life-style, and the relationship between the two.

It can, however, be counterproductive if a fetish is made of these principles. If democracy and equality are not seen as goals towards which groups have to gradually move but as principles that must be applied immediately, then AGs can be paralyzed and become quite

ineffective. Too much insistence on these principles can lead to feelings of guilt, aggression and impotence.

That sharing of a common lifestyle does not necessarily lead to equality and genuine democracy and does not by itself bring about changes in society has been demonstrated by several ashram--like organizations which have failed to make any impact on society.

Although attempts must be at reducing differences in lifestyles and at sharing common facilities such as a mess, over insistence on this can also lead to problems and become counterproductive. Experience shows that attempts by middle class idealists to share everything with others have after some time led to frustration, especially for their wives and families who were not involved to the same extent in the work. We have to recognize the particularities of the middle class and remember that one cannot run away completely from one's background and old habits.

Moreover, there might be need for some privacy, some personal life away from the group, space for various kinds of cultural activities, special interests and hobbies. In fact, such differences among people should be welcomed as a major source of enrichment in human interaction. Inequalities should be reduced, not differences.

Therefore, the best a group can do is to try and move towards the ideal of group life with as little inequality as possible and, in the meantime be very open about the existing inequalities, talk about them and thereby avoid misunderstandings. Frankness about one's background, habits, lifestyle, etc., normally leads to better understanding and smoother functioning.

But again, the final criteria for judging a group should be its effectiveness and impact, and the counterforce it is able to create in society.

Personal Growth

Another area which needs to be evaluated is the growth of each individual AG and PO member. There are various ways to look at this. One is to see whether opportunities such as educational or training programmes workshops are offered to each member or only to a few.

Since the exercise of responsibilities plays an essential role in the unfolding of individual potentialities, an examination of the distribution of responsibilities within an organization helps to understand the involvement and development of individual members.

The development and responsibilities of the women in the group is another major aspect to be looked into. Do women have equal opportunities for self-development? Are they encouraged and helped to take on positions of responsibilities? Are they given responsibilities which are not typically 'feminine'?

By seeing how individuals interpret events, how they analyze situations, one can judge their level of awareness and articulation. Fearlessness, militancy, commitment are other traits to be looked at and evaluated. Innovativeness of individuals and groups can be

judged by the new experiments, new actions, novel strategies used by a group.

Other criteria to judge a group and individuals in it are the existing sense of belonging and solidarity, the spirit of comradeship and mutual acceptance. In the absence of such feelings a group remains a gathering of atomized individuals. To be able to make an impact there must be solidarity among people. A sense of belonging is also necessary to sustain middle class activists as it often happens that their beliefs and work alienate them from their families and friends. They need an alternative family and brother/sisterhood (biraadri in Hindi).

Another way of judging individuals and their interrelationships is by seeing how they deal with sickness, bringing-up children, personal problems and crisis situations such as divorce or death. Do members help each other or does everyone had to fend for her/himself?

Of 'Butterflies'

While discussing this point the group briefly talked about some individuals who are extremely capable and talented but do not stay anywhere for any length of time. Like 'butterflies' they move from project to project, from group to group. They have a feeling that they can contribute something to every group. They do have creative impulses but seem to avoid responsibility. AGs must understand the role of such individuals and get the best out of them. Such talented people do have a positive role to play. Like butterflies they bring pollen, fertilize a few ideas, see some through, leave others unfinished. These individuals need help to understand themselves and their own impulses which keep them on the move and do not allow them to gather any moss.

We also briefly spoke of activists who believe they can start a project, an activity and within a short span (two to three years) make it viable and move on to start something similar elsewhere. This belief we felt is romantic and unrealistic. It is not possible to create viable self-reliant, self-propelling programmes or organizations in such a short period.

Impact on Society at Large

Finally, to judge the overall impact of the work of an AG and/or PO, the evaluation exercise must examine how, in addition to improving the lives of its members, the group has helped other poor in the area and elsewhere. The following questions can be asked to assess this:

- Have wages generally increased in the area?
- Have oppressive and exploitative practices by middlemen, moneylenders, police, government officials, politicians, been reduced?
- Has there been an improvement in the treatment of the poor?
- Has the position of women generally improved? Are there fewer cases of rape, wife-beating? Are there changes in women's wages, literacy rates, participation in local bodies, mobility, practice of purdah (strict confinement of women), etc?
- Has the overall productivity of the area increased?

- Have there been any favourable changes in the official policies/legislation either at the local or the national level?
- Has the AG or PO initiated a debate on issues related to development at the local and/or national level?

The relationship with other like-minded AGs and POs is another area which should be evaluated. To assess this, one can see whether the AG or PO is part of any informal or formal network, or interacts with other organizations, or has taken any joint actions/programmes, or shares some services and facilities with other organizations.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

The essential aspect of self-evaluation, people's views and perceptions and the different processes and interrelationships, cannot be measured through questionnaires. We felt that the best method to collect information, share perception and evaluate the work is through discussions in small groups. Discussions should be held with the agreement of and at the pace of the local people. There should be no element of manipulation in them. If the participants are allowed not only to answer but also to formulate their own questions there are bound to be fresher insights and perceptions which will enrich discussions. In such a way we can also see to what extent there is sharing of ideas, two-way communication, openness, etc.

Group discussion is all the more important in societies where the oral tradition prevails over the written word. In such communities informal talks and narrations remain the main source of information, the only way to share perceptions and views. To some, such a method might appear to lack objectivity; but, if our emphasis is on community action and on evaluating group processes, then what alternative do we have to group discussions and observation? The sum total of the subjective perceptions of a large number of people is the closest we can come to objectivity.

To evaluate ad hoc programmes, special interest discussion groups can be organized, although linkages of different components should always be established. People should see their actions in their totality and not in fragments.

Role play by the members can be yet another method of getting different perceptions. It can bring out spontaneous reactions and honest views. Sometimes it is easier to express things in a make-believe kind of situation.

Analysis of field diaries of AG members is also a method of gathering information for evaluation. For this, of course, it is necessary that activists not only keep regular diaries but also write them according to some agreed upon, effective format and system so that they can be analyzed. One reason why people do not write is because they think that what they write is never read by anyone. Therefore, people should be encouraged to write material which will be used, and in such a way that it can be synthesized. It is such a pity that most of the innovative activities, especially the processes, go undocumented and unshared, thereby making it necessary for every group to experiment anew and repeat the same mistakes. AG

members must see their work as action-research, and develop the habit and discipline of documenting their work systematically.

CONCLUSION

While concluding our discussions we emphasized, that the areas, methods and criteria for self-evaluation listed above are merely suggestions. Self-evaluation requires flexibility and it must be self-determined. Every AG ad PO will itself have to determine the areas or aspects of work it wants to assess, and the methods and indicators it ought to use according to its own objectives and particular situation. There can be no fixed, predetermined and magic formula for self or participatory evaluation. The fact that rather than supplying simple indicators we have provided footnotes, asides and different point of view emphasizes the need for flexibility and debate even on criteria, principles and values. The criteria and indicators we use are just variables, not constants, or infallible touchstones. Self-evaluation is a process which will get refined as groups use it and grapple with it.

Sharing One Earth *

(Extracts from a Report of an FAO-FFHC/AD South Asian Consultation on "Responding to the Challenge of Rural Poverty in South Asia: Role of Non-Government Organisations", Bangladesh, April 28--May 2, 1985. Prepared by Nighat Said Khan and Kamla Bhasin)

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT HALF the world's poor live in south Asia. It is generally agreed now that the development strategies and programmes implemented during the last three decades have failed to effectively tackle the causes of rural poverty. The benefits of whatever development and growth has taken place have not trickled down. Landlessness has increased and so has poverty, unemployment and inequality. Peasants, landless people, the small fisherfolk, plantation workers and women have been marginalized. In addition to this, through environmental destruction, the very resource base of the people is being rapidly destroyed. In most south Asian countries, some local and national Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been actively involved in experimenting with innovative approaches to fight exploitation and to initiate a process of participatory development. The efforts of these NGOs have often been supported by like-minded NGOs from some of the developed countries.

For over 10 years FAO's Freedom From Hunger Campaign Action for Development has tried to strengthen these innovative attempts at rural development by facilitating horizontal communication between like minded NGOs within and between countries in Asia. Through a series of consultations, workshops, training programmes and through the production and distribution of relevant documents, FFHC/AD has encouraged collective reflection and the creation of linkages between NGOs.

With the same objective FFHC/AD contributed to the creation of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD) and has been supporting other regional networks like the Pacific and Asian Women's Forum. FFHC/AD has also provided services to NGOs from developed countries, helping them to build contacts with south Asian NGOs.

Objectives of the Consultation

To carry on this process of horizontal communication and collective reflection (in other words South-South and South-North dialogue), FFHC/AD organised a 5-day south Asian Consultation in

* Freedom from Hunger Campaign/Action for Development, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, New Delhi.

collaboration with the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh. The objectives of this consultation were:

- facilitating a sharing of ideas and experiences among like-minded NGOs from south Asia and from the developed countries and strengthening linkages between NGOs at the national, regional and international level;
- evolving a common understanding of the present nature of rural poverty in south Asia and the major issues faced by the developed countries and the challenge they pose to all concerned;
- initiating a discussion on major issues faced by NGOs in south Asia and in developed countries;
- seeking to evolve a common understanding on the strategies for future action.

Location

The consultation was held in the training centre of Proshika, Centre for Human Development in Koitta, Manikganj, a tiny village about 60 kms. from Dhaka. The isolation and seclusion of the venue provided the necessary atmosphere for intensive, informal and continuous interaction between the participants which is so essential for participants to understand each other's point of view.

Participants

Fortysix persons, 15 of whom were women, participated in the consultation. The majority of the participants were senior workers and decision makers of major NGOs working in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka with whom FFHC/AD has been working for several years. The selection of the participants was planned so that the consultation would reflect the major areas, and the different levels, of development work.

Among the participants were also action researchers who are using their research to strengthen the processes of empowering the poor; as well as developing research methodologies that allow a closer relationship between research and action. Other participants represented NGOs whose main task is to service grassroot level NGOs and to provide a forum through which grassroot NGO's might interact and develop a dialogue and solidarity among themselves.

In addition to this there were four participants representing regional (Asian) NGOs; a further four were from NGOs from the developed countries who also act as donors and there were two representatives from FFHC/AD.

The Workshops, Informal Discussions and Discussions in the Plenary

- Four groups were formed to discuss the following aspects:
- The need and rationale for organisations of the rural poor; the different strategies being used by NGOs; and a collective evaluation of the attempts made so far and the efforts that need to be made in the future.
- The mobilization of funds and other resources needed for

organisations of the rural poor; and the relationship and notion of partnership necessary between 'donors' and action groups in south Asia.

- The need for consolidation of NGO activity and solidarity between NGOs themselves and between NGOs and researchers, communicators, professionals, etc., at the local, national, regional and international level.
- The vision and concept of an alternative development.

Each group was composed of 7 to 14 persons. Workshop discussions took about a day and a half. Three of the four groups started their deliberations within the workshops by listening to the experiences, knowledge and views of each group member although there was no prior agreement that this procedure would be followed.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The discussions started with country presentations from each of the five countries. The purpose of these was to give an overview not only of the situation of rural poverty in the respective countries, but also the causes and ramifications of such poverty. In addition each presentation was to discuss measures, being taken by governments and NGOs to better the lot of the poor. What emerged from these presentations is that despite the specificities of each country there is a remarkable similarity of experience not only in terms of the existence of rural poverty but also in the kind of development that has occurred. Agriculture and the rural sector, for instance, dominates as a sector in the region and in which a majority of the population falls below the poverty line. In India and Pakistan, according to the more optimistic figures, the percentage of the rural poor is at least 50 per cent although in both countries, it was argued, the actual percentage is probably higher. In Bangladesh the number of persons falling below the poverty line is 83 per cent. Regardless of these percentages and how they might have been calculated, the overwhelming similarity was that in each of the countries rural poverty was increasing in both absolute and relative terms, and that this increase was the direct result of the economic policies pursued by the respective governments.

A Critique of Development

In the region as a whole the efforts and plans for development have been closely linked to the world economic system, initially through colonialism and since independence through foreign assistance, loans and the terms of trade. Development in the region therefore has neither been independent nor "appropriate" in that it has not been based on the needs of the majority of the people nor on the specificities of the natural terrain or local culture. This type of 'subsidiary' development, that links into and serves industrial development elsewhere applies to both agricultural and industrial development, both of which are in any case linked.

The development of agriculture has been based on producing more food, on the production of cash crops and on generating a surplus for industrial development but in each case it has been for the purposes of the urban sector. The concentration on food for instance was not so that the rural poor would be better fed but so that there would be

enough food for the urban sector and for export. Since agriculture was required to feed the urban sector and also to provide a surplus for the development of industry, agricultural development was biased towards the larger farmers who had the capacity to produce the surpluses required. This led to increasing control by the large farmers of the resources available (particularly but not only land) and this in turn led to the displacement of a large number of tenants from the land, as well as the 'squeezing out' of the smaller landowners. Agricultural development pursued in the region was responsible, therefore, for increasing landlessness, peasant differentiation and the marginalisation of the rural poor, particularly those directly dependent on natural resources (in India these constitute 50 per cent of the people); and particularly women who not only are the first to get marginalised but for whom few alternative occupations exist.

At the same time the type of industrialisation encouraged in the region has been capital rather than labour intensive although it has been geared more towards the mass production of cheap consumer items than to heavy industry. Thus on the one hand it has been unable to absorb those displaced from the rural sector and on the other has compounded the unemployment situation of the rural poor by destroying indigenous cottage industry and artisanal activities and by making traditional skills redundant.

The policies pursued in the agricultural and industrial sectors, have required infrastructural and energy inputs that have led to the depletion of natural resources and a further marginalisation of those dependent on these resources. Thus the building of roads, dams, irrigation schemes; the exploration of oil, coal, gas and other natural resources; the need for wood, etc.; has not only, in many cases, forced out the rural poor from the areas of these activities but has taken away from the rural poor the control of an access to the very resources on which they are dependent.

The Decision Makers and Political Control

Many of the negative features of the maldevelopment that has occurred may be attributed to influences exerted by global market forces and political systems dominated by the superpowers. It is however the national elites in the region which have been responsible for the continuing dependency and anti-poor policies of the countries of the region. These elites are a product not only of traditional economic power but of an alien bias both in terms of policy and in terms of lifestyles and demands. Thus the concentration on 'western' consumer goods; on 'western' education; on 'western' development and on 'western' political structures; all of which serve to perpetuate and reinforce the distance between those who rule and those who are ruled.

Defence expenditures in the region are very high and they siphon off a large percentage of the national budgets. This level of spending can only be sustained at the expense of the poor. But since it relates to the overall nature of development; to the perpetuation of a dominant class; and to super power interests, it is unlikely that this trend will change. In fact there is no indication from any of the countries in the region that the political and development policies pursued so far will be modified to any significant extent. The

dominant classes are entrenched enough to ensure that their interests are not endangered by long-term pro-people policies.

Future Prospects for the Rural Poor

Since there are no indications that any real changes will occur, there is every likelihood that capital intensive industrialisation and the resulting urbanisation will continue to spread; that the natural resources will be further depleted; and that the rural poor, on whom such policies have had a disastrous effect, will be further impoverished and marginalised. The urgency of the situation for the rural poor cannot be overemphasized because in effect the policies have virtually resulted in a war on the rural poor, a war that shows no signs of abating. The rural poor, who form a majority in these countries must therefore be empowered to regain the ownership and control of resources like land, water and forests. There is thus an urgent need for organisations which can work towards the empowerment of the rural poor and for an alternative vision and process of development. At least some NGOs could play this role provided they could agree on an alternative model of development and on a common programme of mutual linkages, support and collaboration.

OVERVIEW OF VOLUNTARY INTERVENTION IN SOUTH ASIA

There are literally thousands of NGOs in the region but most of these are charity or social welfare oriented organizations. Each country in the region however has a different experience of NGOs from which a regional generalization is not possible except inasmuch as there are similarities in trends and problems and in the attitude of the respective governments towards them. The experience of each country therefore must be discussed separately and the similarities and commonalities brought together at the end of this section.

India

India has the longest history and the widest experience of NGOs working with the rural poor. Prior to 1947 and not unrelated to the Independence Movement, NGOs encouraged the development of handicrafts, participated in the struggles for social reform and for the emancipation of the oppressed. In the 1950's the emphasis shifted to asking for restoring land and other resources to the rural poor. Both Gandhian and Marxist groups participated in movements related to development of the poor and this gave impetus to a fairly wide spread NGO movement encompassing various rural sectors. Many of these focused on empowering the rural poor but they were usually co-opted or suppressed as the State saw fit. By the 1960's most of the indigenous movements, as for example in the handicrafts sector had been taken over by the State, by which time it also became clear to NGOs that the poverty situation could not be reversed by working within the system. Yet working outside it meant that the NGOs operating in this way were subject to government harassment and control. This dilemma remains unresolved, and is in fact compounded by the contradiction that while effective NGOs are suppressed, the government is increasingly recognising their importance and allocating more resources for their work (The 7th Five-Year Development Plan for instance has a separate chapter on NGOs). But this move, some NGOs feel, is more towards the control of NGO activity than an encouragement of it, for by funnelling resources through it's own

channels and by controlling foreign funds to NGOs, the government can oversee NGO activity and direct it towards its own purposes.

Sri Lanka

There are well over 100 NGOs operating in Sri Lanka which have rural projects/programmes of one kind or another. They may be classified in four broad groups: (a) those engaged in purely social service and welfare activities; (b) those engaged in development projects of one kind or another; (c) those involved in educational, research or issue oriented agitational or mobilisation activities; and (d) those working with the rural poor, conscientising and organising them to undertake collective initiatives to improve their social and economic status.

The majority of the NGOs fall into either (a) or (b) and provide relief services, welfare services for children, shramadana activities for creating rural infrastructures, health and nutrition programmes, provision of lavatories and wells, and skill training for self employment. In general there is no attempt to create an awareness among the communities about the causes of poverty or the socio-economic reality that confronts the poor. Most of these NGOs also work with communities as a whole without a proper discrimination between the rich and the poor, ignoring the contradictions that exist in the rural areas. The status quo of rural power structures remains undisturbed.

Only a few NGOs can be classified under (c) or (d). Those in (c) are either engaged in research and dissemination through workshops and publications and other educational activities for awareness building (largely on macro issues) or creating public opinion on selected issues of importance to the rural population (e.g., operation of agri-businesses or violation of human democratic rights). The few NGOs in category (d) work directly with the rural poor. They attempt to create an awareness among them, and promote organisations of the poor to improve their social and economic status. There is a definite need therefore for such organisations to increase in number and effectiveness though there is every likelihood that the government would attempt to control the activities of such NGOs.

Bangladesh

Apart from the various social welfare NGO's, three types of NGOs exist in Bangladesh. The first are the target oriented groups trying to unite people to implement economic programmes or for strengthening their receiving mechanisms. Others are involved in consciousness raising and mobilizing the poor, and yet others, particularly the foreign NGOs use the community development approach. All three types identified above try to base their programmes on the participation of the people and see themselves only as facilitators. They argue that the task of the NGOs is to help the poor help themselves and by and large the NGO's in Bangladesh consider their role as having been particularly effective in a country still suffering from the damages of a devastating war of liberation. It is estimated by ADAB that 10 per cent of the total population is serviced by NGOs. This may be correct given the number and size of such NGOs, the size of the committed cadre and the amount of donor funds available. Despite this however there is a growing dissatisfaction among the NGO's that

the issue of poverty itself is a political issue and that while the NGO's themselves are not facing up to this, the government is aware enough to initiate moves towards financial control of NGO work.

Pakistan

While the rural poor have from time to time organised on their own behalf and have struggled for their rights, few NGOs work towards empowering the rural poor. However a number of NGOs do exist in Pakistan but most of these are "charitable" or "social welfare" organisations acting as "middlemen" with a top down approach. This is true not only of those run by upper class women involved in social work but also community based NGO's which tend to be run by local leaders. Exceptions to this are when villagers come together as action groups for specific activities such as building water channels or storage facilities or for jointly purchasing agricultural inputs, but few of these actions solidify into organisations.

Some "innovative" initiatives do exist, primarily in the urban centres and usually extremely well financed. Those in the rural areas tend to be organised by christian missionary groups or some by national NGOs. While these have met a measure of success in the work that they undertake, they are still not, with a few exceptions, focusing on mobilizing and empowering the rural poor and especially not on class lines, and nor is there much of an attempt to make the rural poor self reliant even economically.

Nepal

There is a growing consensus on the ineffectiveness of the bureaucratic and administrative capability to handle the situation of rural poverty and more and more people are turning to the role of NGOs to provide the impetus. Even the King recently emphasised the need to encourage NGOs to take an active part in the development of the country. However while Nepal, as all other countries in the region, has a history of traditional institutions, these do not necessarily work towards empowering the rural poor, although they do work for the rural poor in localized efforts based on caste, ethnic or religious lines. Besides this there are now some "modern" NGOs providing social services or those based on class or occupational lines. But in Nepal these are entirely government supported, administratively and financially, and hence these NGOs can be seen more as quasi-government institutions than as independent NGOs. The need for independent NGOs definitely exists and there is a possibility of using traditional institutions for this purpose, but a conducive political environment and legal provisions will have to be initiated by the government before such NGOs can emerge, and this does not appear to be happening.

NGOs in the Region--A Generalisation

Despite the specific experiences of each country certain trends did emerge which were perhaps worth noting particularly as they reflect on the main themes of the consultation. To begin with, although there are countless non-government organisations, only a fraction of these work towards empowering the rural poor and even those that do focus on this task, tend to be micro organisations dealing with local issues. Thus fragmentation and isolation are key problems. And yet the need for such NGOs is immense, given the

realisation that the poor have only a bleak future in these countries if they are left to face the future alone. NGOs working for the empowerment of the poor had to consolidate their efforts, support each other and expand if they are not themselves to be marginalised and sooner or later controlled and/or suppressed.

ORGANISATIONS OF THE RURAL POOR (ORP)

Although the overall discussion in the consultation emphasised the need for supporting organisations of the rural poor to help empower the rural poor to struggle on their own behalf, there was also an underlying despair that not many NGOs had been able to play this role. This despair came through not only in the presentations but also in the workshop discussions. Even though this realization damped the proceedings somewhat, it did help to raise fundamental questions about the role of the rural poor in their own struggles.

ORP--Pointers

The experiences of ORP so far is that by and large they have been doing a form of 'charity' work despite their claims to the contrary in that they have focused on the consequences of poverty and not on the causes of it. Their operations thus have at best been salvage or welfare operations within the very system that causes poverty and injustice. Their solutions are therefore ad hoc and incomplete and in many cases not very different than government programmes. Thus the ORP end up not only doing the governments' job in the immediate sense but also help perpetuate the system by linking the rural poor into the system itself. The target group approach, generally used by ORP, often takes the form of economic measures and not the empowerment of the rural poor and more importantly, they do not work for changes in the overall socio-economic and political structure.

On the Question of Inherent Contradictions in Organising the Rural Poor within the System

This question was raised in the workshop and brought up for discussion in the plenary. Essentially it was asked whether the poor should be organised at all within the present system because this could have two opposite results: radical or conservative. If rural poverty can be alleviated to a certain degree within the present system, class contradictions would get softened and this in turn could strengthen the dominant class. This in fact was the rationale behind the antagonism of the traditional left to "economistic" or "welfare" measures. On the other hand rising levels of consciousness of the organised rural poor could take a radical direction which in turn could possibly usher in a radical social transformation. The arguments against depending too much on ORP were that while it was possible to alleviate poverty in small pockets as a result of NGO action, this could not be able to change the character of the State and of the dominant classes. Others however argued that even small pockets of radical change could help push for overall radical transformation, particularly if the pockets increased and also if they made for a concerted action to influence the State. By and large there was consensus on the second view; that despite failures in the past, ORP could perhaps make some contribution in changing the system but only if they also were able to change themselves first.

Possibilities for Self-change

Organisations of the rural poor, while operating within the issues defined by the people themselves should also focus on the larger issues. Issues like the ownership and control of natural resources and other means of productions. Also every effort must be made to link up with other NGOs even though this may be difficult given the fact that the strategies and techniques to organise the poor are so varied that there is almost no scope to replicate experiences. Still a linking up is essential and not only at the NGO level. Linkages have also to be established with other groups including political parties, trade unions, and other political and professional organisations. Infact people's organisations need to be formed at all levels. There is also a need to form organisations of sympathisers and supporters, not only for political and financial support but also often to provide access to a range of resources needed by the NGOs such as professional and scientific knowledge. Moreover, the linkages should be at the country, regional and global levels.

In the session devoted to collective self analysis the group felt an inadequacy in efforts at achieving much of the above and felt that generally a solidarity was lacking. There was little inter-NGO consultation and little readiness for any broad based consolidation or action. Some people from the same countries were talking to each other for the first time during this consultation, and yet they did feel the need to come together to define a common goal and strategy. Infact, during the discussions it was felt that solidarity on various issues was a distinct possibility and that an attempt should be made towards it.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

All NGO work depends on resources, the main perhaps being motivated workers and supporters. The need for funding is also crucial. The issue of financial resource mobilization was therefore discussed as a separate issue by one of the groups in which several of the donor NGOs participated.

On The Question of Self Reliance

Discussion on this issue dealt with the apparent contradiction between self-reliance and the need, for foreign funding. From the exchange of experiences it emerged that NGOs in the region, while relying on funds from foreign donors for certain central costs like coordination, training, transport, etc., could and often did make attempts to make certain village level activities self-reliant. Such efforts could involve public fund raising; running commercial operations allied to their enterprises or even commercial activities unconnected with NGO programmes. However, given the constraints of local NGOs it was recognized that NGOs in the region would find this task difficult because of: (a) scarce managerial time; (b) because NGO personnel were often not competent business people; and (c) they then often ran the risk of themselves becoming exploiters of the labour they employed. Thus NGOs would still need to rely on funds from foreign donor NGOs.

Problems Between NGOs and Donor Organisations

Despite the need for foreign NGO funds there is a growing

dissatisfaction with the present relationship between south Asian NGOs and donor NGOs. There were complaints that a huge amount of time and effort was lost in bureaucratic procedures for processing applications; that donee organisations often had to fit donor NGO structures of time and category; that funding continuity was often upset by political and economic changes in donor countries; that donor NGOs often insisted on self reliance within time frames that were often unrealistic; and that south Asian NGOs, resented the patronising attitude of donor NGOs, while donor NGOs complained of the "beggar" mentality of Asian NGOs.

On the Need for a More Equal Relationship

The group felt that the relationship between recipient and donor NGOs could only function smoothly on a partnership basis. This concept was further defined by the south Asian NGOs insisting that donor NGOs prove their commitment to the empowerment of the poor by their own work in development education and campaigns in their own countries; that donor NGOs should be prepared to support the work of conscientizing the poor and to help with the research necessary for this. They should also be prepared to engage in sectoral programmes such as taking an ecological perspective in agricultural and technological work, and most of all to be cognizant of indigenous knowledge and skills.

Other Issues Relating to Recipient and Donor NGOs

NGOs in the region were conscious of the question of dependency on donor NGOs. Apart from efforts towards self-reliance and developing a relationship based on partnership, there were certain other issues which came up for discussion:

- On the question of dependency it was admitted that anything involving money would create a certain amount of dependency. Those for whom this is a problem may be able to explain it away by insisting that it is, in fact, reparation for previous exploitation, or an exchange in payment for the learning and experience acquired by the donor agency.
- Another philosophical point that was brought up was that the aim ought to be mutual inter-dependence in the world order, and that striving for independence was a capitalist and excessively individualistic position.
- At the same time the point was also stressed that south Asian NGOs must always be prepared to do without outside funds; the basic work must go on. It was likely that, if the project was successful, donor agencies, would come looking for successful projects.
- That NGOs in the region have a responsibility to try and reform donor NGOs away from their onerous and at times misguided policies. They must be morally strong to be able to refuse funds from organisations whose philosophy and style is unsympathetic to the work that they do. This point was particularly important since few donor NGOs were committed to the long-term interests of the rural poor. The presentation on donor NGOs given earlier in the consultation made clear that they were quite ineffective in their own countries in challenging the policies of their own governments which in turn were responsible for the policies of governments in south

Asia. It was suggested that the solutions to rural poverty would have to be global in approach especially since poverty in the third world was caused, perpetuated and integrally linked to the world economic order and its arms like multinational corporation. Free Trade Zones; defence spending, etc. For this global approach worldwide development education; cross-country campaigns and joint political pressures were essential.

- For this global approach to be successful and even for a better relationship between recipient and donor NGOs, the donor NGOs suggested that South Asian NGOs should be clear as to whether they want to accept funds from rich country governments. Also they need to be clear as to the methods and ways which can be used to publicize the work of south Asian NGOs for the purposes of raising funds and support for them. There must be agreement in other words on the information used and a clarity on whether south Asian NGOs are prepared to accept the demands for information that a partnership relationship will require. This may be in the form of reports, photos or even unpleasant television crews.
- On both sides it was agreed that simplicity and austerity were virtues for both donor and recipient NGOs.

On the Question of Government Funds

The group stated that, NGOs should not hesitate to use government funds because large scale national development cannot take place without national resources being used for it. Secondly, government money is people's money and the NGO's must put pressure to get it for people-oriented and people's own development programmes. While stating this the group realized that there were many problems in using government money but that these could be overcome. Some of the problems and ways to overcome them were:

- Make sure that the money offered was for projects, which were in line with the aims and objectives of NGO activity.
- Try to get maximum flexibility in the face of obstructive accounting procedures.
- Try to get flexibility from an onerous topdown target type approach.
- Use government funded projects, as a means to persuade governments that NGO initiatives and ways of working were worth supporting.

NEED FOR CONSOLIDATION AND SOLIDARITY AMONG NGOS

Despite the negativism expressed by the working group on past experiences of consolidation and solidarity, it was agreed that both were necessary. This was particularly true in view of the diagnosis of the present situation that there was an all out war against the poor by the dominant power structure. It was necessary therefore that those who wanted to challenge this war must prepare themselves for it, despite the setbacks they may have experienced in the past. This would require changing and strengthening themselves internally as well as linking up at the local, national and international levels.

The Past Experience

As already mentioned, the past record of NGO efforts to move towards consolidation and strong alliances had not been encouraging for even when they had been able to work together in emergency situations such alliances had proved to be tenuous and temporary. NGOs have had the tendency to work in isolation, to do their own thing, to set up their little kingdoms, sometimes to the point of actually demarcating areas and people as their own "territory" of "target" group. Furthermore, instead of coming together, the tendency had also been to split into smaller groups, often with the encouragement and support of donor organisation. all this meant that NGO efforts remained fragmented and did not add up to becoming any kind of an alternative to the system itself.

The cause for lack of solidarity had unfortunately often been the result of personality problems and mistrust; of competitiveness for scarce resources; the easy availability of large amounts of donor funds; the divisive policies of some donor organisations; differences in approach, programme and strategies and sometimes, although fortunately not often, ideological differences. But many of these "problems", it seemed stemmed from the fact that NGOs working with the poor had so far been working largely for the delivery of a variety of services; in starting income generating activities, etc., and not for a radical movement to attack the root causes of poverty. For such a movement a framework or an ideology was a must and on this at least (however vaguely it may be defined or expressed at the moment) there seemed to be little disagreement among the NGOs working for the empowerment of the rural poor. A focus on ideology and strengthening of links could provide the framework for consolidating NGO action. At the same time, it was necessary for NGOs to critically evaluate their own work, individually and collectively, and to sort out or even shelve certain differences with each other. The infighting, the competition, the undermining of each other's efforts, and the present disarray of the NGOs must be curtailed. For it is in this area that the weakness of the NGO movement lies and not in its limited spread or lack of resources. Thus, introspection and self analysis, common ideologies and common action are the key to the NGO movement and for this several levels of alliances are essential.

Alliances at which Levels?

Now that there are an increasing number of NGOs which recognize the need to organise the rural poor as a prerequisite to tilting the balance of power and resources in their favour, it is necessary that such NGOs make a serious attempt at forming alliances with those working for the same cause. In some countries in the region some such attempts have been made but these need to be consciously and carefully intensified.

Alliances are also necessary between NGOs using different "entry points" or those developing an expertise in specific areas like education; health and nutrition; legal aid; credit; environment; research; communication etc; assuming of course that the ultimate aim of these NGOs is also to empower the rural poor and help in the spread of awareness of their problems and needs. These special programmes infact need to be used as a means to improve the resource base of the poor and to politicize them, otherwise in isolation such

programmes have a tendency to end up as simply delivering services and inputs which tend to strengthen the status quo and further weaken the poor. For example, if a programme to make credit available to the rural poor does not challenge the existing exploitative relationships, it is not going to benefit them in the long run. Such programmes therefore need to work in close collaboration with NGOs who are concentrating on organising the poor. Thus NGOs working in different areas and levels need to form alliances with each other, assuming of course that they are broadly working for a common cause.

The Need for Alliances with Other Sectors

The present systems of education, research, media and communication, judiciary, technology communication experts, scientists, professionals such as doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, etc. and again at multiple levels. Participatory and action oriented research done in close collaboration by activists and researchers is necessary and it will help both action and theory. There are already some very encouraging examples of such collaboration in the region; for example between feminist researchers and women activists; between researchers and the fish workers movement in India; between scientists and NGOs working on environmental issues; and between doctors, engineers, architects and NGOs. Such collaboration needs to be and science etc. are all controlled by and generally serve the dominant classes. However, depending on the situation in the country concerned, these very systems do offer some scope to be used for the benefit of the poor and marginalised social groups. But for this to happen alliances were necessary not only between like minded NGOs but also between them and journalists, researchers, systematically improved and supported.

Collaboration needs to be improved also between NGOs and groups working on alternative media and communication. With the help of communication experts NGOs need to establish alternative networks of information, develop alternative communication programmes, document NGO efforts in the region and disseminate this information as widely as possible. Since there are few groups in the region in alternative communication, those that do exist should make their services available to NGOs in the neighbouring countries.

Need for Regional and International Alliances

In addition to furthering alliances and solidarity among like-minded forces within each country, there is a need also for alliances at regional and international levels. Regional alliances amongst groups in south Asian countries are particularly relevant because the peoples of the sub-continent share a common history and have largely similar socio, economic, cultural and political problems. They also share a common terrain and natural resources like the mountains and rivers. Thus any change in one affects the others, particularly changes in the environment. For instance if forests are destroyed in one country the effect of this will be felt by the neighbouring country as well. Progressive forces in the region must therefore often conduct their struggles in concert with each other. They must share their knowledge and expertise and make common cause against what are common forces working against them.

Similarly, as the policies and operations of the developed

countries have a direct bearing on developments in the south Asian region it is necessary to develop linkages and solidarity with NGOs and other progressive forces in the developed countries. Some examples exist of such collaboration on issues like food aid to Bangladesh; the role of drug multinationals in Bangladesh; the baby food issue; operations of multinationals encouraging indiscriminate use of pesticides and fertilizers. In such cases the initiative for identifying issues and starting international campaigns around them should come from NGOs in south Asia who should then invite NGOs from the developed world to support them by lobbying and campaigning in their own countries. Support from donor NGOs should not only be in the form of financial assistance. They must also oppose policies that help perpetuate poverty in south Asia, policies that are invariably instigated and supported by their own governments which are often in league with business interests and commercial pressure groups.

Specific recommendations on possibilities of consolidation and solidarity were given by the group working on this issue. These are given in the section which deals specifically with the recommendations of the Consultation.

FIVE MAJOR ISSUES

Throughout the discussions there were several issues that continuously came up for discussion. Five of these were of such importance that it is perhaps necessary to highlight them by presenting them separately, even though they may have been touched on previously in this report.

Ownership and Control of Natural Resources

Repeatedly the participants brought up the fact that NGOs have so far only worked towards "helping" the poor to marginally take advantage of some of the opportunities available to them. They have not focused attention on basic changes in society. For the rural poor the most basic of these is the ownership, control and protection of natural resources. In other words long term solutions like the issue of land, resource and asset reform is a prerequisite to alleviating rural poverty and NGOs must help organize and empower the poor to demand these.

In general there was agreement that given the present nature of development the poor do not have a future in south Asia unless critical changes take place in the direction of development policies. The present process of development has damaged the resource base of the poor and by simply linking the poor into the system, NGOs are making the poor dependent on the very system that exploits them. The system therefore itself needs to be changed, and the participants generally agreed that as a group they recognized the right of the poor to the primary resource base; that they recognized the need for NGOs to work to help the poor re-acquire the ownership by both men and women of the primary resource base; that they recognized the need to work to diminish the erosion of this resource base and they agreed that NGOs must work for essential changes in the power structure; that is that NGOs must work for social transformation and not merely to keep the poor at marginal levels of existence.

The Issue of Women

The situation of poor rural women received particular attention. Not, as it was argued in the presentation on women, because women's issues are separate but because their experiences are different and their methods of dealing with them are also different. Women are often the first to get marginalized by the development process and they are usually the last for whom alternative occupations/employment are generated. In many cases women have suffered more than men as a result of development policies. The introduction of agricultural machinery, changes in cropping patterns and the destruction of the environment has had the effect of increasing the work load of those women still involved in the production process. Or they have entirely removed women from the process itself. In both cases the impact has been negative. This is particularly true in relation to changes in the cropping patterns and the use of green revolution technology and especially in the case of environmental destruction. The destruction of biomass sources for instance has meant that women have less and less access to household needs such as fuel, fodder and water (which women are responsible for in the culturally accepted division of labour). Women, therefore, have to travel increasing distances to obtain these. When one adds to this the time that they must spend on household work, agricultural work and caring for animals, one realises how disastrous the destruction of the environment has been for them.

Few government policies and schemes recognise this or cater to women as possible "beneficiaries", and sadly most NGOs also have a made bias especially where issues like the ownership and access of land and other resources are concerned. And yet women can be more open to group action because of their need to collectively protect themselves and also due to their binding role within the family structure. Several examples exist of women "saving" themselves and their communities from development, as when women resisted a lime stone quarry in Almora, when they resisted resettlement in Assam, or in the Chipko Movement where they played a vanguard role in preventing deforestation.

The women's movement provides many insights into how people can collaborate and struggle on immediate and long term issues, whether these experiences are integrated by NGOs or not they must be continuously kept in focus without however attempting to take over or submerge the women's movement itself. The role of women in alternative development is crucial because without them there can be no alternative just as without them there can be no development, But women must themselves be involved in deciding what this role should be.

The Environment Issue

Environmental destruction and the role that this plays in increasing the levels of poverty received particular attention. For the rural poor the environment is literally the 'world' on which they exist but since it is also the raw material on which all development depends, it has been increasingly depleted by the dominant classes for their own purpose. This depletion and destruction has in actuality meant deforestation; it has meant floods and landslides; soil erosion; fuel, fodder and food shortages, and desruption in the lives

of whole communities; all of which have negatively affected the poor (especially women) and compounded the poverty situation.

The group therefore agreed that all development must consider the question of environmental destruction, and NGOs must therefore always look at the long term effects of development policies. Environmental protection in itself however is not the issue. The concern must be for how the environment is used and for whom, and these decisions must be made by those dependent on the environment, that is, in most cases the rural poor.

Possibilities of Alternatives

As already mentioned the group agreed that there was a direct relationship between poverty and the present nature of development. An alternative, therefore, was needed. At the same time it was felt that NGOs had not succeeded in adequately defining for themselves what this alternative could be or what they should be working towards. One of the groups prepared a tentative and somewhat futuristic idea to be used as a point of departure for future discussion on this issue.

Given the critique of development and the discussions in plenary, the working group suggested in general that the primary productive resources (land, water, forest, etc.) must be made available to the poor, both in terms of access and socially viable forms of ownership. In other words the poor should be able to meet their basic needs but these must be defined and provided for by themselves. The pattern of ownership would need to ensure that women were included as co-owners and sharers on an equal basis. Models for this did exist in pockets and these could be replicated. Also indigenous institutions, many of which are still alive could be used for drawing ideas for an alternative mode of development. The basic assumption behind the search for alternatives was that people, in this case the poor, can function on their own and that essentially human beings can change in order to control and improve their material and cultural existence. NGOs can play a role in the transition stage by helping to facilitate this change but they have to take care that they do not themselves become an 'alternative' power structure.

Specificities of Alternative Development

More specifically the group suggested that agrarian reform was an essential prerequisite for an alternative vision but the reform need not be uniform. In fact, for it to be really people based it would need to be flexible and related to the specific needs of different communities. It would need to be based on viable economic and social systems. In other words the approach must be holistic. Agrarian reform was defined as not only land reform but also included reforms in the access and control of water, irrigation, pastures, forests, credit, marketing and production choices.

A question that was posed was whether such a system would be able to produce the surplus food needed for the urban sector and, given the existing levels of cash requirements, whether the rural poor could do without cash. It was argued that the alternative system did not envisage a cashless economy. Surpluses would be produced to feed the urban sector and to generate cash but, unlike in the present

system, this surplus and its distribution and quantum would be controlled by the poor. In other words the producers of food must be fed first, the surplus then being used to feed the urban sector but that no food in any case would be produced for export. Development based on such an eco system would also curtail rampant urbanization, just as it would lead to tremendous employment potential in agriculture and the growth of rural based agro and cottage industries.

Similarly, industrial development would be geared to local needs and to the majority, not to the needs of the elite or the world capitalist system. This is not to suggest that there would be no further development of industry; only that the commodities produced would cater to the needs of a larger number of people. An example of this was that although steel would continue to be produced, it would be used, say for bicycles rather than for cars or other luxury and wasteful items of conspicuous consumption.

A society such as the one roughly etched here would not be 'simplistic'; nor was it an attempt to revert to some idealistic past. On the contrary such a system would require very advanced levels of science and technology. In fact the knowledge component would be crucial, though the concept of knowledge itself would need to be changed. The knowledge system would need to be highly 'advanced' and sophisticated, yet based on indigenous experience and easily understood and handled by all those to whom it would relate. In other words 'advanced' knowledge would be required to reach out and merge with indigenous knowledge creating a new non-elitist theory and practice of knowledge.

Such a decentralized society would be held together by a State which is not an owner, a producer or a provider. The State would merely co-ordinate or link up the different sectors; provide communication and infrastructural facilities; and conduct the necessary research and experiments needed by the people.

The NGO Way

In order to move forward to achieve such a human environment, it was felt that NGOs had to keep track of certain essentials:

- They should not cause regional imbalances either by going into areas where work is already being done or by concentrating too many resources in one area;
- Their plans, programmes and strategies should not just be based on the needs of the poor but also involve the people in planning and implementation;
- That programmes should not only be relief actions but should attempt to influence policy. Advocacy and intervention by NGOs, at other than local levels, is essential because a few localised efforts would not be able to change unless the forces were brought to bear on the national development effort;
- The role of NGOs should not be limited only to experimenting and creating models of alternative development but also to resist anti-people policies and programmes. At the same time they must also provide information, communicate vital issues, influence public opinion, build up support and as said earlier,

influence policy.

- Lastly and most importantly, NGO demands must be clear. Those working with the rural poor must therefore create pressure for the ownership and control of the primary productive resources by the rural poor/community (including women). Where ownership was not possible, such as in the case of seas and rivers, the demand for access and control by the poor had to be emphasised.

Sharing One Earth: The Importance of a Regional Focus

Regardless of its political divisions, the subcontinent of south Asia is unique in its historical, cultural and geographical affinities. It is in fact so interconnected and so interlinked that it is almost inconceivable that change can occur in one country without it affecting other countries in the region. This is true at the political level but even more so in the area of ecological and environmental change. Thus, if alternative development were to be based on the eco system action would have to be taken at the sub-continental level. This is why progressive forces in all south Asian countries had to join together. The people of the subcontinent share one earth, an earth that must be inherited by the poor of all the countries regardless political boundaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The main recommendation of the consultation was the creation of links and solidarity at different levels and between different sectors. This has to be a carefully planned process which could start by getting to know each other better through visits to each others' areas, participation of field workers in joint training programmes, participation in workshops, etc. Such interaction was most crucial at the community level between the workers of different NGOs, for it was only through such interaction that a meaningful understanding about each others work, and enough trust to work together, could emerge. Gradually alliances would emerge on specific issues. As the working relationship between NGOs improved they would take up joint programmes. The process of developing solidarity would be slow and carefully planned because in the past NGOs had tried to forge solidarity in a hurry. This has led to set backs for the movement and to unhealthy cynicism about consolidation and solidarity.

The working group on consolidation and solidarity suggested that instead of making general recommendations the consultation should decide to identify issues around which the participating NGOs should try to work together. It was suggested that because of a consensus had emerged on the close relationship between poverty and the destruction of the environment, NGOs should thus launch a campaign to challenge the rapid and continuous erosion of the primary and productive resource base of the poor (land, water, forests) and to struggle to restore the ownership and control of these resources to their rightful owners.

While accepting this recommendation, the plenary session also made a call for joint campaigns on more local and immediate issues. As for issues with regional and international implications, it was felt

that solidarity campaigns could be spearheaded by competent national NGOs or existing regional organisations like ACFOD.

The following could be the main components of a campaign on such issues:

- participatory and action oriented research to gather information and to develop a critique of the negative developments taking place;
- dissemination of information and NGO perspectives to initiate debate and mobilise public opinion;
- action programmes at different levels to raise the consciousness of the people and to help them get organised to challenge harmful policies and programmes;
- action on experimental programmes and strategies for development. For example, if depletion of forest resources was an issue, then community forestry programmes could be initiated by NGOs. These alternatives had to be carefully planned and constantly monitored to ensure that they did not deviate intentionally or otherwise from their stated objective of empowering the poor.

The Consultation also suggested that the following programmes be taken up or continued at the south Asian level:

- Sharing of information and audio-visual materials on major development issues and people's organisations and movements in the region;
- Organisation of regional training programmes in development communication. It was decided that FFHC/AD in collaboration with CENDIT would initiate action on these two points immediately;
- Continuation of regional training programmes and exchange visits being organised by FFHC/AD and ACFOD;
- Identification of common actions by similar groups/NGOs in the countries of the region.

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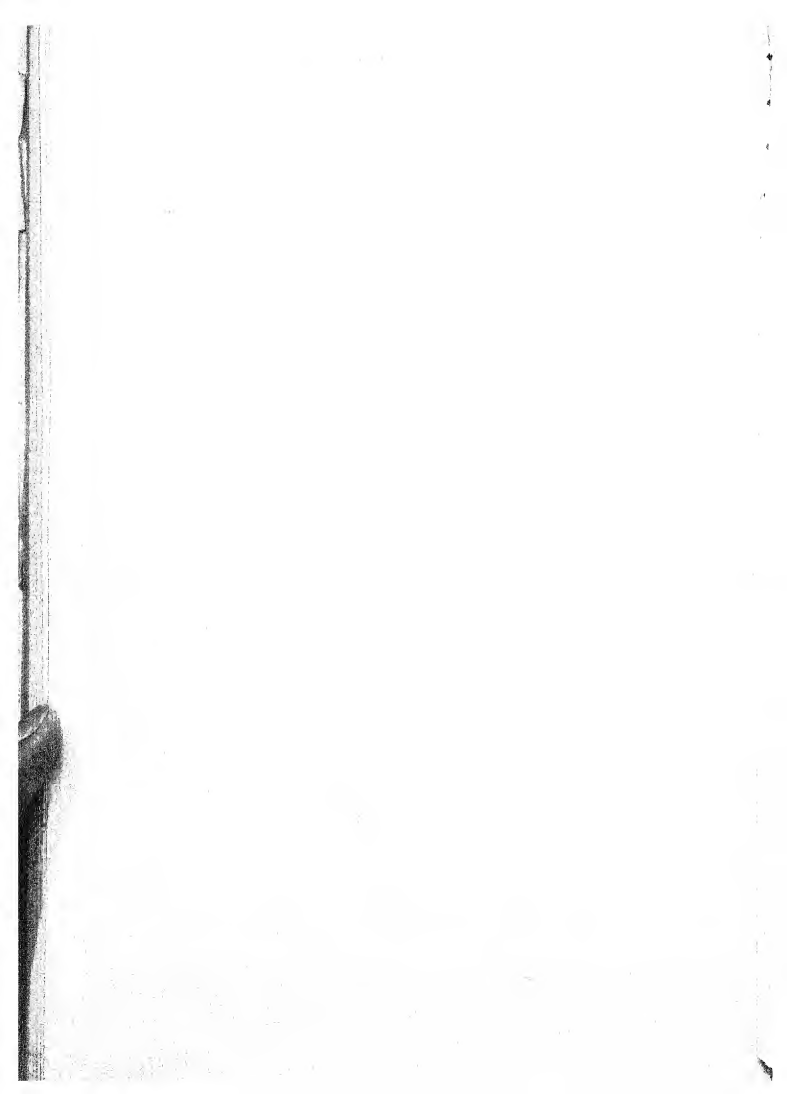
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EDITORIAL

PREPARATION OF administrators to cope with changing requirements in any society is a difficult task.

The aphorism that 'administrators are only born' died decades ago yielding place to the need for training administrators to help them meet adequately the serious and diverse challenges of development which may be further spurred by populist electoral compulsions in a democratic set-up as has evolved in our country. In the chain of transformed realisation, the present phase marks an all-out and rather impatient effort to impart training to all age groups and levels of civil servants (including the alleged abortive controversial bid to 'Harvardise' it), particularly of those belonging to the Indian Administrative Service. The goal of the present thrust unmistakably is to attain administrative excellence in the shortest possible time. This itself poses a serious challenge with an element of urgency before the framers of the present personnel policy to bring about a sufficiently demonstrable all-round improvement at the bureaucratic level in programme implementation and delivering goods and services to common man, lest the whole exercise gets castigated as a brainwave affecting adversely the sagging image of the governmental system.

S.N. Sadasivan, in his article, discusses a host of relevant issues on training for administrative excellence. He covers matters like promotion of theoretical and conceptual skills and teaching of public administration as a subject in our universities. He finds teaching of the subject as abstract which may

well be contributing to, what Sadasivan calls a "contemptuous" attitude of civil servants to "formulated or organised knowledge" causing "resistance to theory..., even as an input of essential knowledge." Trapped in such a mental frame, the civil servant turns out to be "a victim of his own ego and conceit" and "seeks to find a vicarious justification for his intellectual self-denial". This, according to Sadasivan, and justifiably so, "remains a major hindrance yet to be overcome for scientific organisation of training courses at various levels of administration".

Among other issues discussed by Sadasivan are: finding teaching talent with requisite critical insights in governmental functioning, relevance of content, comprehension of the radical change in the overall value of public administration, social rationality, training abroad, handicaps afflicting trainers, training values and philosophy, programmes of training in policy, need for revision of design and methodology of training, etc. Certainly all this goes to point out clearly that for evolving a holistic and effective long-term personnel policy, not only adhocism is to be shed but an elaborate exercise has also to be undertaken drawing full advantage from the rich and varied experience of: (i) premier civil service training institutions in the country, (ii) eminent teachers, researchers and trainers in the field of public administration and allied areas, and (iii) senior civil servants, particularly the retired civil servants, known for their relentless efforts to bring about positive change in the system. Integrating the experiences of these three sources is bound to prove more rewarding than the self-defeating attempts to transplant alien models and exposing members of our bureaucracy manning policy making level, to situations and formulations which may not have any relevance to a developing country like India with its own burden of the past as well as problems of development for future. Moreover, the composite and organic nature of training must be comprehended in its operational details. It may not be really worthwhile to concentrate mainly on certain senior sections in public service without trying to grapple with the problems of training at different levels of public servants.

In the next article, Potter focuses on an important area of our personnel policy, i.e., transfer of IAS officers as it obtained during a block of 10 years, i.e., 1977-86. To identify patterns of transfers, which he terms as 'mobility', he has gathered state-wise data pertaining to duration of stay of IAS officers in a post and analysed it on a four-point

scale, that is less than a year, between 1-2 years, between 2-3 years, and over three years.

Potter's findings are quite shocking as he finds that during the 10-year period, on an average, 54.4 per cent IAS officers stayed in a post for less than one year which renders them to be nothing more than a mere "bird of passage". The average figure for the longest duration in Potter's scale, i.e., over three years, which can be considered as significant for initiating substantial measures for administrative change by an incumbent, is barely 6.6 per cent. He also makes a comparison of transfers between different states of Indian Union (he clubs Meghalaya with Assam, Tripura with Manipur, and the Union territories together).

Examining possible reasons for "erratic mobility pattern", Potter does not find much evidence in support of the common belief that it is solely due to political interference, "other factors of importance", according to him, "are filling up of leave vacancies, shifting incompetent officers, rewarding others through promotion, replacing others who have retired or died, etc." These he mentions by way of suggestions, which could be examined by researchers in future.

Study of the impact of rapid and erratic transfers on performance of an administrative organisation has remained an unexplored area not only in India but even in the USA and the UK despite realisation of a need therefor. Though one hardly needs empirical evidence to prove that such transfers adversely affect motivation and enthusiasm of executives yet, as Potter concludes, "It is time for students of public administration in India to attempt to find out what the consequences of such rapid and erratic movement are for administrative performance."

The next article by Aduaka sheds light on an important operational aspect of Nigerian civil service, i.e., dichotomy between professional specialists and generalist administrators. It is interesting to note that within the same civil service (Aduaka tells us that there is only one civil service in Nigeria), on the basis of training and acquisition of skills in a particular area as against those having broad-based education and training, civil servants are bracketed as professionals and generalists respectively. The space at the top being too narrow, problems arise when civil servants of the same service, though rather artificially bracketed in two categories, move up in the hierarchy with expectation to reach the top.

Aduaka has gathered relevant data for his analysis on the basis of a detailed questionnaire which he administered to

these officers to probe their mind about issues relating to the dichotomy (his data shows that the professionals nurse a grudge that the generalists enjoy a more advantageous position in terms of authority, power and upward mobility). Aduaka's article indeed gives some useful information in the field of comparative public administration.

The next article, by Harshad R. Trivedi, presents a critical analysis of Karl Marx's well known alienation theory. His contention is that Marx's theory has become irrelevant due to transformation of realities as we have moved from pre-industrial era to industrial era and are, in fact, now on the threshold of post-industrial era. Truly, this radical change in ethos is very significant.

Trivedi examines the differentiation-discontinuity syndrome of Marx's theory from micro angle (i.e., the philosophical and theological dimensions), meso angle (i.e., relating to self, nature and human labour), and macro angle (i.e., the illusion of human progress). He contends, "process of alienation and differentiation is inseparable from values, attitude and behaviour of man" and upholds Hegel's assertion that alienation is the eternal condition of man.

He then examines Marx's concept of alienation in the framework of social system and institutional order to discover that expert opinion "concur with Max Weber's suggestion to create small producers' societies to avoid the evils of bureaucratisation of human society, and thereby escape harmful impact of alienation in social relationship".

After discussing various manifestations of the concept of alienation, he attempts to arrive at an agreeable perspective which could be further probed in future. Trivedi concludes that while alienation is a value-loaded concept, differentiation (from which alienation flows) is value-free. Conceding the variations in the quality and nature of differentiation phenomenon at micro, meso and macro levels in a social system, he holds, "input-output process of human actions in cultural, social, economic, political, scientific, and technological spheres of life, and the differentiation-discontinuity phenomenon leading to alienation in social relationship are eternal conditions of man in society".

With the all-embracing spread of administrative activities in society, the proper exercise of administrative discretion gains tremendous significance. In the next article, Pandey discusses the concepts and ideologies relating to administrative discretion and judicial review. After discussing the

concept, including the framework of administrative law and constitutional law under which it operates, he discusses the challenges that confront exercise of administrative discretion. In the next section, he gives details of the process of judicial review. Since exercise of administrative discretion is often challenged on grounds of constitutional provisions relating to fundamental rights, he presents for the benefit of the readers some guidelines culled out from relevant judicial decisions and the reliefs and remedies that are available against administration, and the grounds on which an otherwise permissible judicial review could be refused.

In view of the fact that since very few discretionary powers are "absolutely unreviewable" and "human machinery is involved in decision making", the author rightly concludes, "In a democracy governed by the rule of law, the executive government or any of its officers cannot afford to act arbitrarily and, therefore, occasionally the courts have also observed that before the exercise of discretion, administrative authority must also frame rules for the proper exercise of discretion."

To mark the completion of hundred years since the appearance of Woodrow Wilson's famous essay in 1887 on 'the Study of Public Administration', which is supposed to have laid the broad foundations of launching public administration as a new discipline, we have included an article on this theme by Chitlangi.

After briefly recounting the contributions of Woodrow Wilson in the field, Chitlangi traces the history of the study of the discipline and how Wilson advocated a clearcut dichotomy between politics and administration, defined the role of public opinion in administration, established indispensability of civil service, and laid down methods of study for public administration. Woodrow Wilson, thus, provided a comprehensive framework for the discipline which is fully valid today despite all the transformations and radical changes that have affected our political, social and economic existence during the past 100 years.

Chitlangi is merely trying to give well-deserved credit to Woodrow Wilson when he observes that Wilson's essay could be termed as "seminal" as it "marks the birth of public administration as a self-conscious enquiry" or what Allan Shick called a "generic course". The claims on behalf of Woodrow Wilson, however, have not gone unchallenged over the years. Chitlangi's modest effort should stimulate further thinking on the subject of evolution of public administration as an

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autonomous academic discipline in the context of both developed and developing countries.

Though development of infrastructure is basic to development plans in India, yet "neither the assumptions underlying infrastructure development have been subjected to an in-depth analysis nor its contribution to the achievement of the development objectives fully assessed". In his article, Joshi discusses some major issues on the theme, like economic vs social infrastructure, scale and technology, quantitative expansion vs qualitative improvement, concentration vs dispersal, expansion vs maintenance, pricing, etc. He then discusses some of the major deficiencies and lacunae in the existing infrastructure planning in the country and also offers suggestions to remedy these.

The case of infrastructure planning, as presented by Joshi, deserves a careful consideration not only in order to make it "a more powerful tool for removing regional imbalances and promoting development and improving the quality of life of people, but also securing much better returns...from the heavy investments already made in the area under various plans".

Shridharan also writes on an important aspect of the theme of planning and one which is going to assume increasing importance due to pressures of decentralised development as well as those of popular participation. He presents a case study of district planning process in Karnataka. By way of introduction, he gives all the measures that have been initiated to facilitate the district planning process since the Fifth Plan. He then gives an account of the characteristic features of district planning in the state. He follows it up with a discussion on some of its financial aspects.

Shridharan's case study is based on a discussion with senior officials in the district and he enumerates his observations emanating from that discussion. In the next section, he makes some useful suggestions, such as need to: take a long-term view in district planning and even deviating from national and state priorities in view of local peculiarities, assess economic and social impact of schemes on district's economy, supporting and upgrading the role of District Planning Officer, seek effective participation of people, explore non-conventional resources at district and lower levels, etc.

Though we have talked so much on initiating the planning process from below yet we have done precious little in this direction. Let us hope that Shridharan's study will motivate others to engage their attention on this very crucial level of

our planning mechanism to facilitate realisation of the elusive goal of taking effectively the benefits of development to the people in rural areas who have been bypassed for so long and in such large numbers despite best intentions at least at the formulation stage of our plans. The relevance of a number of workshops of Collectors being organised at the initiative of the Union Government in different parts of the country can be understood in proper perspective in the context of the need and strategy for local or district planning.

Due to cumulative effect of the neglect of development in tribal areas in a realistic framework and politicisation of tribal people that followed on that score as well as due to electoral politics, these areas of late have assumed a sensitive dimension, particularly those falling in the north-east of the country. Therefore, besides according higher priority to their planned socio-economic development, it is also natural to bring to focus functioning of some of the political institutions that have been created to suit their specific needs. In the next article, Jyrwa and Gabriel review the relationship between the Government of Meghalaya and Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council from 1978 onwards.

The relationship between the two political institutions is reviewed through examining: (i) the process of according of assent by the Governor on the various rules and regulations passed by the Council pertaining to its area of operations for their enforcement; and (ii) the discharge of the function of managing primary education entrusted to the Council in 1978. Regarding the former, the authors point out, a evidence of unhealthy relationship, that five out of the eight bills approved by the Council failed to get assent of the Governor. They also discuss details relating to the refusal. To remedy it, they suggest, "the provision for the previous approval of the Governor be done away with" on "a rule, regulation or a bill passed by the District Council". It is a conclusion which cannot be accepted unless all the dimensions of politics and development of the area have been considered.

Management of primary education does not portray a healthy relationship either as the State Government did not release funds to pay salaries to teachers because the Council was found to be diverting funds for other purposes. The State Government ultimately took over this function in 1984 on the recommendation of a one-man Commission which looked into this problem.

In order to enable the District Council in the State to discharge their due functions according to the provisions in

the Constitution, the authors rightly observe that these Councils "deserve to be seen as essential political institutions" as, in the absence of panchayats, they provide to the people "good training in local self-government". They also suggest allotment of more funds to the councils by Government of India in the State as was done in the case of Mizoram. Certainly this institution must not be allowed to perish and instead be nursed and nurtured to blossom as a true democratic institution, capable of answering the aspirations of the people through their participation. We believe that many more studies of this kind of the administrative and political innovations in the States, which, with passage of time, have attained Statehood, are required in our federal set-up.

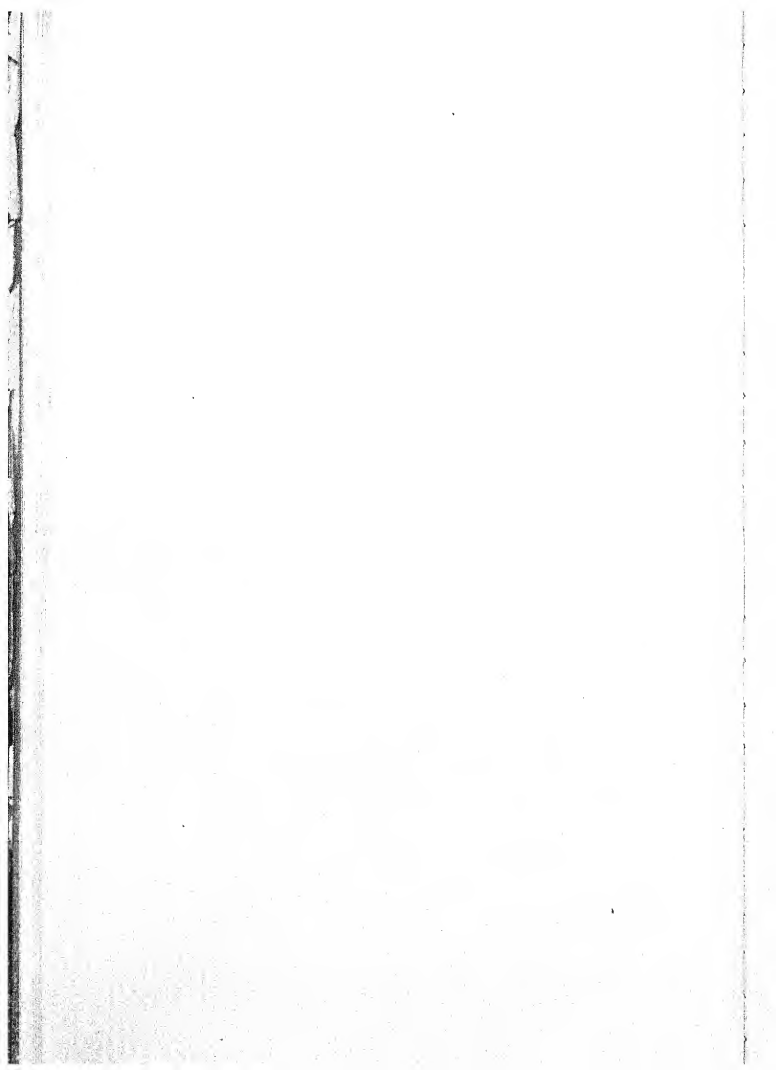
It is generally believed (in fact many research studies have also corroborated it) that problems with which public sector corporations are afflicted in newly developing nations are inevitably due to their economic condition and administrative underdevelopment. Kuruvilla, in his article, presents the case of a major Crown Corporation of Canada -- Canada Post Corporation--to argue that such problems are not peculiar to the newly developing nations only as the major Crown Corporation of a developed nation like Canada also suffers from similar problems despite availability of enormous resources in terms of finance, expertise, technology, etc. The problems of Canada Post Corporation are: inability to ensure efficient and universal postal service, inability to attain financial self-sufficiency in operations which is one of its important objectives, failure to establish a more efficient management system (than the one that existed under Department of Post prior to establishment of the corporation), inability "to insulate itself from poisonous political interference from Government in many areas of its management", failure to establish better labour relations and protecting the postal service from severe strikes, etc. Kuruvilla, therefore, concludes "Post Office has consistently and convincingly failed both as a department and as a corporation".

Truly, "generalising from a single example and case study is always problematic", as the author concludes, nevertheless it is quite revealing to know that even in developed countries, "some of their public corporations...continue to experience a variety of serious economic and administrative problems which defy easy solutions". Obviously much more rigorous research effort would be needed in future to arrive at some definitive generalisations.

Besides the articles, we have included a note by Sinha in this issue which addresses itself to revitalisation of the office of Collector in Bombay City and Bombay Suburban District. He discusses an interesting package of seven steps or Saptapadi which he evolved during his term as Collector of the district. Coming as it does after Lakhina's Ahmedabad experiment, which we covered in one of our issues a couple of years ago, it would perhaps not be wrong to surmise that after all the need to streamline administrative functioning at District level has started engaging serious attention of some of our District Officers. Their effort surely deserves to be encouraged and promoted to salvage effectively our administrative system from the morass in which it is caught at the district level, a level which is vital for the people for reasons well known to students of public administration.

The issue carries, in addition, the usual sections on book reviews and documents.

--EDITOR



Training for Administrative Excellence

S.N. SADASIVAN

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION as a discipline in Indian universities is a relatively recent introduction and no part of it has grown to such a proportion or prominence as to be treated as a separate branch of study. In the USA, however, in a few universities and institutes, like the Wildavisky Institute, Berkeley (California), public policy is adopted both as a subject of study and an object of analysis but, in the United Kingdom, it is not recognised even by the academics as an independent discipline. In the United Kingdom, a specialist on public policy will be refused recognition by the bureaucracy and an academic in the usual course will hardly be emboldened to claim himself to be an expert on policy analysis for the government.

In most Indian universities, public administration is taught in an abstract style without rendering to the student a realistic understanding of its concepts and theories. Theories in public administration are, by and large, products of either practice or deductions from experiences although a theory can be formulated for effecting changes or introducing a reform in some of its specific areas.

In universities, public administration is taught as part of a programme of education and its practical aspect is largely left to the imagination or speculation of the student. On the other hand, in a training programme of government functionaries, public administration, as given in text-books, cannot be adopted in its entirety.

In a pre-entry training programme or in a foundational course for higher civil service, selection of topics conducive to its objective from public administration is so done that they form into a cohesive syllabus with maximum practical bias. Nevertheless, the essential theories and concepts are never omitted as otherwise the knowledge necessary for the practice of administration cannot be imparted.

Theories and Concepts

The theories and concepts have a major role to play in the civil service training. They provide the civil servant with a refined and

purposeful vocabulary to give expression to his ideas and experience. They open for him an intellectual vista that keeps up a continuing interaction with public and the sphere of developing administrative knowledge, in the best interest of his profession. They equip him with instruments of investigation and tools of analysis without which he may prove himself to be too crude in the sphere of social action. They correct his wrong convictions which are the sources of his prejudices and upon which his behavioural logic is built.

They promote his conceptual skills and make himself intelligible to any class of audience. Their study enables him to keep abreast of the developments in the field of his activities and form and articulate ideas into self-expressions of value to posterity. The psychic expansion that they bring about, broadens the perspective and sharpens the insight of the civil servant. His power of ratiocination and capacity for deductions to reach conclusions, logically tenable or scientifically defensible, are largely their contributions. They enrich his literary aesthetics and enhance his abilities for defining, commenting, interpreting and communicating.

They render him the vision to make objective discrimination between right and wrong, truth and untruth, justice and injustice, moral and immoral and, above all, between the real and the unreal. It is from theories and concepts he understands that the authority invested in him has to be rationalised in order to make it acceptable to the people for social coordination that sustains the public order.

Like administrative theories, social theories should also form an integral part of a course design of the civil service training. The primary object of administration is to administer laws in society and a civil servant, who does not have adequate knowledge of society in which he operates, can hardly be successful. Theories will explain to him situations of social aberrations and methods of social corrections for setting at work the process of social control. The inability of the administrator to store his experience is largely due to lack of conceptual skill, attributable directly to the scornful neglect of the study of theories, especially sociological.¹

Indian civil servant is contemptuous of formulated or organised knowledge, which he inclines to dub as academic or abstract or, in other words, of no practical utility. Yet, it is an amazing contradiction that when he wants a single idea to be thought out, he is invariably found to be helpless without an academic contribution. Resistance to theory from the bureaucratic quarters, even as an input of essential knowledge, remains a major hindrance yet to be overcome for scientific organisation of training courses at various levels of administration.

Evaluations are no reliable guide to measure the efficacy of a

programme, for the participating bureaucrats maintain normally two opinions, the one for their private consumption and the other for pleasing the organisers and, at times, the sponsors too. A course generally lauded for its excellence in the evaluation sheet has often been privately derided by most of its participants in order to fall in line with their superiors who are opposed to training even as a concept. This double think or unprincipled duality, betraying the basic hypocrisy prevailing in society, is a misleading mask that is worn by the civil servant to discredit trainers and training system and scoff at the much obvious training needs in the government.

Power is Knowledge

In a feudal society as India, with widespread illiteracy, the bureaucrat, as a relatively well-placed public functionary, can make claims of omniscience which will be conceded without challenge from his unnerved environment. It was the Buddha and not Francis Bacon who told: "knowledge is power" but the bureaucrat in India has easily rebutted the proposition "power is knowledge". An average probationer of the Indian Administrative Service² has hardly exhibited an abiding interest in the acquisition of more knowledge as a precondition for serving the society, but he often tends to betray a complacency that what he acquired at the university level is the finality of knowledge in his impatience to occupy the chair of authority.

A victim of his own ego and conceit, the civil servant seeks to find a vicarious justification for his intellectual self-denial in the abstract curriculum and trainers, who do not directly practise administration as a profession. He hardly realises that the makers of history are not the writers and teachers of history and a lecturer in public administration need not necessarily be a career civil servant. Paradoxically, senior administrators, who have agreed to engage training classes, are often found wanting in theoretical grasp, conceptual and communication skills, and temperament and reason that help create a learning atmosphere.

It is a well known fact that teaching talents all over the country are not many and some of them, who have come to the training field, are utterly disappointed with the lack of encouragement and incentive to the extent of perhaps complete denial of recognition. To an imaginative, intellectually earnest academic, consistently devoted to scholarship, administrative process is automatically intelligible but, on the contrary, it will be an arduous task for a bureaucrat to get out of the tangles of redtape and resume his journey in the world of ideas unless his intellectual quest trounces the vanity of his officiousness. Considering the fact that the science of

administration, not excluding its two prestigious branches, policy and decision-making, is the contribution of the academic, a good teacher with critical insight into governmental activities can be the best choice for training public functionaries.

After Independence, however, the interaction between the government and the intellectual has virtually been brought to a halt by bureaucratic cynicism and vagaries, and political ineptitude, and unless it is actively revived, the interest of training in public administration will continue to suffer.

Relevance of Content: Eclipsing Management

The trainee often does not hesitate to put forward the view that there is little relation or relevance between the content of the programme and functions that he has to perform either in his office or in the field. In recent times, management has gained a measure of supremacy and it is introduced as a matter of style and fashion in almost every training programme, ignoring the ascendant place and supremacy of public administration. Management consists of a segment of administration and some techniques and aides, indeed useful for both business and government. Overuse of management has made it to be a term interchangeable for public administration itself and a course in management is mistaken for a programme of public administration. Overstretching management into every area of public administration is tantamount to inciting a midge to encroach upon the realm of a giant.

An excessive dose of management is no substitute for new ideas in public administration. The civil servant today is concerned not as much with the process of social control as with social change and he requires imperatively to be informed of the latest development in the field of public administration and how ideas should be translated into action for the transformation of society through a developmental framework.

Hardly any serious research is allowed to be done in the area of the working of government and as a result, a famine of ideas has really spread in the province of training. The new ideas that emerge, defying the discouraging circumstances, are given neither the reception nor the response they deserve from bureaucratic quarters. Public administration demands serious and intensive studies to get release from its characteristic monotony and redeem it from dreary and disappointing shallowness, if it is to transform itself into a profound subject, disseminating refreshing thoughts for inspiring and guiding its student as well as its practitioner.

It is a futile or fanciful expectation that every topic taught or discussed in a training class must be of direct use or relevance for

administrative action. The legacy of British system of administration, which in the past concentrated on the now out of date apprenticeship or on-the-job training, is still lingering in the precincts of bureaucracy that every government functionary participating in a course is led to nurture the expectation that it should solve all administrative problems confronting him. The primary purpose of a programme intended for any administrative level is to provide an invigorating respite from the tedium of routinism, to train and discipline the mind, to restore or expand the perspective, to exchange views and experience, to keep up the innovative spirit by imbibing new developments in professional field, to familiarise with the use of new tools and techniques that improve performance and to enable processing of thought to solve the contradiction between the society around and the society contemplated by the constitutional system.

Social Rationality

Every trainee must be given a complete idea of the ills and injustice prevailing in his society, the need for social correctives to eradicate them, and the role administration has to play for carrying out the changes necessary for its democratic transformation. The caste system in India, to which even Muslims and Christians have fallen a prey, is hardly taken up in a training programme for rational analysis that explodes its myth and exposes its monstrosities. The absence of social rationality in India has led to political promiscuity, and administrative venality and sadism.

As discussion on society has become a taboo, the original but vanishing characteristics of society reappear to give sanctions to evils like sati, bride-burning, practice of untouchability, human sacrifice, atrocities on the weakest of the weak, starvation death, enforced nudity, caste and communal blood feuds and unconscionable dowry extraction, while administration, which is fully empowered to act against them, passively looks on. The effort of the Hindu orthodoxy today is to carry society to where the British had found it, from where they had left it.

Trainer's Job

It is not the business of a trainer to be all throughout with the trainee pointing out the time and situation in which he should use the principles and techniques he gathered from a training course. A trainee, with prompting intelligence and presence of mind, does not require props and crutches to apply his knowledge acquired from a programme to apt administrative situations and professional contexts.

A diligent and sagacious course designer will bring together

different segments of knowledge in accordance with the training needs determined, but he cannot afford to be as adventurous as to foresee for the trainee every occasion for their use. An influential section of the civil servants has already reassured itself that in a country, where the overwhelming majority of the people are victims of illiteracy and poverty, the key to effective administration is to be found in the display and exercise of power and not in intellectual attributes and gifts of knowledge. For them, training ostensibly is redundant. The character of administrative action will be contingent upon the conditions of the clientele expecting to be served. In India, the training system obviously suffers from hypochondria that diagnosis, prescription and administration of medicines for the deficiencies in and retardation of the civil servant are sought to be done, ironically by himself.

Training Personnel

Institutions of training, unlike in other countries, are not headed by men of erudition and vision having deep understanding of society but exclusively by members of the Indian Administrative Service, which is one of the reasons for stereotypic approach and crass conformism in training. Some training institutions, mostly for their pre-entry training courses, draft trainers, giving them flamboyant designations, largely from departments, which is not more than a tremulous step to build a feeble halfway house between traditional on-the-job training and modern training schemes, aimed at increasing the ideational and psychic strength and performance standards.

While there is a virtual competition among higher officials of outstanding merit in the defence services to occupy the top positions in their training centres, scarcely a senior officer of the civil service normally chooses a training job except under pressure or as an inescapable imposition and he takes the tenure of his appointment resentfully leisurely for entirely personalised ends, including at times for obscurantist festivities in which he has a wild interest. The political supervision over the training is so poor or far remote that the disgruntled civil servant is almost free to keep the training institution as his private preserve. Unless political authority evinces a special and sustaining interest in civil servicetraining, the prevailing generalist culture may hasten its dysfunction.

Training Abroad

There is, of course, a virtual struggle intensified by powerful influences and interventions among the civil servants to go abroad, particularly to advanced western countries for training and over a hundred of them, often the favoured or fortunate, are sent every year

to institutions in foreign countries, particularly in the United Kingdom, West Europe, the USA, Canada and Australia. The curriculum of these institutions are heavily loaded with theories which are, by and large, derived from their experience and environment and have little relevance to India. However, not a murmur of protest is raised by any Indian trainee who in his own country is a crusader against the so-called 'academic input'.

The programmes themselves are in no way superior to the comparable or similar ones in India but the Indian trainee is outrightly discouraged to take them light-heartedly or derisively as he does with the training at home. Very few of the teachers of these institutions have any idea of Indian administration and Indian conditions and it is no easy task for them to correlate the theoretical inputs in their courses with practical situations in India.

The objective of training in advanced countries of the west, is certainly to raise the efficiency of government functionaries to cope with the problems arising largely out of a highly developed complex economy in a creative, innovative and homogeneous society. But, in India, training should aim at socially enlightening the civil servant to overcome his mental barriers that stand against social change, and imparting to him knowledge and skills essential to bring about all round development using mainly the administrative machinery in an atmosphere of social cooperation. The management process, which has its resounding success in countries of advanced technology, will as such be absolutely a misfit for a poverty-ridden, fragmented, and immobile society aspiring for a minimum standard of living.

The economic benefits that the Indian trainee gets for gathering a few fruits of a creative civilization and the diversion he takes for enjoyable pastimes, which are not openly available to him in his own country, leave in him a sense of gratitude to exaggerate the utility of the course and eulogise its organisers. Certainly, the change of environment might have afforded him an opportunity to rediscover a sense of freedom and equality to give greater self-expression as a mark of his achievement. However, on his return, the skills and knowledge he obtained from the training are not put to use for he is either immediately transferred or assigned a job which by nature entirely rejects their application. Yet foreign training remains the most enticing pasture not because it is intellectually green but of its diverse attractions.

Trainer's Handicap

Ostensibly, the resources at the disposal of training institutions abroad are enormous and the authority and discretion available to their trainers are beyond intervention and encroachment. On the

other hand, in India, as an eminent academic with extensive training experience struggles to implement his well-thoughtout strategy of distribution of his extremely limited resources, his effort can easily be thwarted by a petty clerk with the blessings of his supervisor, specialised in obstructionist tactics. Administration in all training institutions in the West is, admittedly, auxiliary and at the command of the trainer, but, in India, except in a very few institutions, it seeks to over-reach the trainer or completely subordinate him. A civil servant, who sat at the helm of a premier administrative institution for a considerably long time, has so personalised its administration that it was not only given encouragement to override the trainers but also to make serious inroads into research, vital to training, to the demoralisation of the total faculty.

A training system should inculcate values. A value is an ideal which serves as the basis for formation of the conduct of an individual or the operation of an institution capable of securing positive social approbation. It, as well, may be a socially significant objective for the realisation of which either an individual or an institution may be striving. Adherence to a value checks corrupting influences and adds to the moral strength of society, and in the individual it fosters such attributes as honesty, probity and rectitude. Every training programme should contain certain values to be imbibed by its participants so that there will be some moral inhibition or mental reluctance against administrative abnormalities.

Knowledge Gaps

It is not difficult to observe in senior civil servants, both as a generalist class and as individual administrators, several gaps in terms of essential knowledge which have their mild or serious reflections upon their performance in comparative contexts either national or international. It should, therefore, be one of the aims of the higher training programmes to detect these gaps and adequately cater for them by providing suitable background or other reading material and holding group discussions. Like any other subject, public administration is also developing its own branches and relations with other disciplines and a civil servant cannot afford to ignore or remain ignorant of them. The deficiency in essential knowledge is found at all levels of service and the trainer can take care of it, provided he is candidly informed of it in advance by individual participants or there is a method of finding it out in their own departments.

Every training programme should be an intellectual interval and a mental excursion to the sphere of social development which is

retarded from its very start largely due to bureaucratic indifference. In a technical training course, the coordinators exhibit a tendency to confine strictly to the subject matter on the unconvincing plea that anything more will be irrelevant and superficial to the participants. In this country, even the most complex technical programme must state its social objective as well as the justification for it in precise terms so that the participants will have a clear perception of the role they have to play as an instrumentality of change in a bewilderingly intricate society.

Training is a means by which experience is transformed into knowledge and knowledge is used to build up experience. A training institution should not only be a centre of continuing research in public administration but should also be a specialised agency that utilises the product of research for improving training technology and suggests authoritatively changes and reforms necessary in administration. The expertise that a trainer in public administration has acquired, should be drafted for governmental purposes in order that his special knowledge is fruitfully employed and not wilfully belittled as at present. He should be given the status to be governed by "the doctrine of plural personality" since, apart from a trainer, he is an academic, a specialist in public administration, a researcher in social sciences, and a consultant to the government.

As in the West, social significance of institutions of training in India should be enhanced to preserve their sanctity. The attitude of the trainee towards them will change only if they are made into places of achievements for him.³ Unless the trainee knows for certain that his professional interest and his personal development are aligned with his successful undergoing of the training programmes, he is likely to take training and training institution with the usual bureaucratic casualness or disregard. The stature and reputation of an institution are the direct contribution of the quality of its personnel. A trainer need not be one who has to his credit a chain of formal academic distinctions but he must have proficiency in multiple disciplines to understand the implications of an administrative situation, perspicacity and devotion to knowledge and social insight to promote excellence.

Policy Programmes

Higher civil service training should mainly be concerned itself with such matters as policy, doctrines, impact of ideologies, strategy for organisational development, personnel efficiency, overall coordination and interrelationships that maintain the integrity of the administrative system.

The Edward Heath spirit that had given shape to special policy

processing bodies in the ministry of external affairs and cabinet secretariat has already been frightened away by the fall of 1986 by the ghost of reaction dwelling in the inimitable model of omniscience--the office file. It will be disastrous for a vast and diverse country like India, which has to draft the fast advancing science and technology for its development, to go by a process of policy evolution conditioned by clerical wisdom. In a fiercely competitive world, absorption of the cream of knowledge into the policy structure alone will prepare a nation to demonstrate its intellectual vitality, psychic vigour, farsightedness and unerring judgement.

In democracy, every difference and every distinction in the governmental plane and between political parties is observed in terms of policy and it is the foremost duty of statesmanship to raise it from a prosaic clerical contraption to a superb intellectual creation in which future history should evince abiding interest. The portals of government must be open for extensive study by the students of public administration so that there will be a steady growth of literature of public policy to make it a sub-discipline of public administration.

Senior civil servants participating in policy programmes are found to be wanting in perception and conceptual skills to promote the level of discussion to the precincts of theorising. Whatever the objections, formulated knowledge or theory alone can form the scientific framework for training, especially in policy programmes. In India, policy making will be a challenging job only when experts in public administration and intellectuals are intimately associated with it and a sizable literature is developed for the purpose.

The need for training in public policy for higher civil service was felt long ago but no demand for organising courses on the theme was made on any institution concerned with public administration till recently. Higher level administrators, on the whole, are either indignant on the question of their undergoing training or disinclined to move in the direction of getting themselves trained especially in policy science unless an enlightened political leadership makes training a mandatory assignment for them. Without an amount of positive compulsion from superior quarters, training will be taken as a mock ritual and the learning process involved in it will be given a cavalierly treatment. No training institution can achieve success in conducting courses in a new area of public administration, particularly policy, unless it is given adequate time to make preparations and to strike a balance between its resources and their actual requirements.

Training Philosophy

India's training philosophy continues to be nebulous or at the nascent stage and its administrative culture feudal to exempt the privileged from any exertion not excluding the tender strains of training, and to drive the lesser mortals to coercive performance. As a reaction, the first line supervision has broken down, and no small a number of subordinate staff tend to treat their permanent job as part-time for extra-earning and with impunity takes to lucrative employment outside the government on regular basis.

There is little effort to study the behavioural trends of the lower employees with the result that training as a means of corrective fails to take effect in Indian administration. An all embracing training philosophy highlighting the quality of performance through consistent acquisition of knowledge and skills should find a conspicuous place in the administrative culture which treasures intellectual values. This is an imperative and immediate requirement of training and administrative development in India.

It must be a firm policy of personnel management that training should be imparted to every level and every category of functionaries at such intervals as are necessary for their development, meaningful to the objectives of the administration.

Revision of Design and Methodology

Every course design should be periodically revised in the light of the developments in the related field, the evaluation of previous courses, the skills and knowledge the participants should acquire for efficient performance of their jobs, the attitude that they should form towards the clientele, and the changing socio-political environment. Some training institutions of private orientation tend to design courses to cater for the particular taste of public servants which exposes a trading reflex and not training expertise. Like programmes, the methodology of training must be subjected to scrutiny from time to time for determining its efficacy. The possession of an array of fanciful and sophisticated training instruments, however, is no guarantee for institutional excellence nor it constitutes a substitute for creative talents or originality essential for training.

Enormous investments are being made by training organisations in the purchase of foreign training films which are hardly popular with the trainees mainly because they depict social and organisational contexts entirely alien to India and the pronunciation of the characters involved is highly unintelligible. A few training films produced in this country deal with management themes in a style not different from that of the west and they offer little thought as far as crucial issues in public administration are concerned.

For a number of topics in public administration, like public relations, decision-making, public policy, maintenance of law and order and process of investigation, the film can be profitably used to convince the trainee that what are normally adjudged to be mere abstract ideas can assume concrete action shapes. Nevertheless, production of films of high utility value to training in this country is dependent upon a number of factors of which creative talents are more important than investment capacity.

Lecture Method

Of the various methods, the lecture is often made a target of criticism although it is still by experience the least burdensome to the trainee. A traditional method which has yet no effective substitute, the lecture calls for a set of correlated attributes. However, a training institution finds it difficult to get or retain a lecturer with originality of thinking, fluent and figurative expression, liberal views, courage and lively humour, as in the existing circumstances, it does not provide any scope for his development, not excluding by way of promotion. The frustration of competent trainers with academic background is inherent in the staff structure of training institutions in which the career bureaucracy is still dominant.

The art of managing the training institution is more easily mastered by a professional trainer than by a civil servant posted to it for a fixed short term, and it will be a constructive proposition to think in terms of a cadre of professional trainers constituted solely on the basis of their established reputation. The trainer's task is to teach not what he knows, but what the trainee should know and if what the training institution offers is what the trainee should seek for, the stimulus and response necessary for their healthy interaction can be found. Even so, the trainer can only take the proverbial horse to the stream but neither can he make it drink nor can he transform it into a kingly carnivore.

REFERENCES

1. For other facets of the question, vide S.N. Sadasivan, "The Role of Theory in Civil Service Training", *The Hindu*, Madras, February 4, 1980.
2. The writer served the National Academy of Administration as a trainer for over 14 years.
3. This view is held by the author since 1963-64. It is heartening that recently some steps towards this end have been taken by the National Academy of Administration.

IAS Mobility Patterns

DAVID C. POTTER

IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officers move frequently from post to post. Everyone in government knows that. Years ago, Dughashi (IAS, Karnataka) remarked that an IAS 'officer' is always a bird of passage...a 'gypsy', and that "the whirl of merry(misery)-go-round of transfers goes on continuously".¹ A few scholarly studies done at that time and more recently have reached the same conclusion.² There have also been many tangential references to the problem in the literature on public administration in India. Such studies and passing references have all been partial (about IAS collectors only or a particular organization or region); they have also tended merely to report that transfers are frequent, express disquiet about that fact, and then leave the matter there. In this article, data on the mobility of the entire IAS over a 10-year period are presented for the first time, together with annual rates of movement for each state cadre of the Service. I also make some observations about possible explanations for IAS mobility patterns and about assessing their administrative consequences.*

PATTERNS OF MOBILITY

Data on IAS movement are not easily obtained. They have to be compiled on the basis of frequency analyses of data on postings of individual IAS officers as reported in the annual Civil Lists. Each

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List, of course, has thousands of names. So digging out these data is not a task that would appeal to a scholar in a hurry. Although frequency analyses of most individual entries in Civil Lists are quite straightforward, some entries are unclear, and these require interpretation and educated guesswork. My own analysis of the IAS Civil List for each of the 10 years, 1977-86, produced the picture of IAS movement portrayed in Table 1.

Table 1 IAS MOVEMENT PATTERNS: 1976-86

Strength of IAS Cadre		Length of Time in Post (Percentages of IAS)			
Year (As on Jan.)	Number	Less than One Year	1 - 2	2 - 3	Over 3 Years
			Years	Years	
1977	2,901	54	28	11	7
1978	3,084	58	26	10	6
1979	3,236	55	30	10	5
1980	3,404	49	32	13	6
1981	3,373	60	22	11	7
1982	3,539	52	31	9	8
1983	3,734	51	29	13	7
1984	3,797	56	26	12	7
1985	3,910	51	31	11	7
1986	3,970	58	25	12	6

NOTES: The number (n) of IAS on which each of these percentages is based is somewhat less than the number actually in the IAS at these times. The reasons are:

- (1) All IAS under initial training at the time are excluded from the table, e.g., the 1986 figures exclude the recruits of 1984 and 1985, the 1985 figures excluded the recruits of 1983 and 1984, and so on;
- (2) The data exclude such civil servants listed in the Civil Lists who were: on foreign assignment (including training abroad), on leave, under suspension, awaiting posting, on deputation to another state or on whom there is no information--normally they constitute about 5-6 per cent of the total strength of IAS;

- (3) There are two instances where the data in the Civil List on a state cadre was seriously deficient, e.g., data are missing on one-third of the Karnataka cadre in the 1982 Civil List and on one-third of the Madhya Pradesh cadre in the 1981 List;
- (4) There are a few other instances where 10-13 per cent of a particular state cadre in a given year are not included in the number of IAS on which the percentage is based for the reasons mentioned above.

SOURCE: The data have been compiled by the author on the basis of information on individual postings in each of the IAS Civil Lists for the years indicated in the Table.

Table 1 shows that as on January 1, 1986, 58 per cent had moved to their present post sometime in 1985; as on January 1, 1985, 51 per cent had moved to their present post in 1984; and so on. In other words, this year's movement patterns are found by analysing next year's IAS Civil List.

The main feature of IAS movement patterns during the 10-year period, as shown in Table 1, is that a majority of IAS officers were holding posts for less than one year before moving on and fewer than 20 per cent stayed for two years or more. These patterns contrast sharply with official transfer policies in states calling for posting of three years normally, and certainly not less than two years.³ At the Centre, official norms were three years' tenure for an Under Secretary, four years for Deputy Secretary, and five years for Joint Secretary and above.⁴ The reality of IAS movement, as portrayed in Table 1, was very different from these official norms. One point about the all-India figures: there is a consistent discrepancy between the Centre and states. IAS officers on deputation to the Centre normally stayed in one post for two to three years, whereas IAS in states moved far more frequently. For example, a majority of the Tamil Nadu IAS cadre in Central Government posts as on January 1, 1983, had been there for more than two years, whereas only 12 per cent of the IAS in the state secretariat and the districts had lasted that long. In sum, what Table 1 shows is that, despite official policies, IAS movement from post to post is actually, on the whole, remarkably swift.

One other feature of Table 1 that stands out is the fact that IAS movement jumps up in the years 1977, 1980, and 1985, i.e., election years. I say more about this later.

The data reported in Table 1 are general all-India totals. More can be learned about IAS movement by breaking down the all-India

totals in terms of the particular state cadres that comprised IAS during the 10-year period. To report the full range of movement data for each cadre for each of the 10 years is a prohibitively complicated undertaking in an article like this. What one can do here is present a break-up of state cadre of the "less than one year" summary percentages in Table 1. This has been done in Table 2.

Several things need to be said right away about the percentages in Table 2. First, they show IAS officers who took up within the previous year the post they were holding on January 1. The data ignore those (fairly unusual) instances where an officer moved two or more times within the previous year. To that extent, the data in Table 2 may slightly underestimate the annual rate of movement. Secondly, the percentages necessarily include tenures in posts for any length of time within the year, however short. For example, IAS officers who may have only just moved to their January 1 post in the previous month are included. This contrasts with the analysis of transfers by Sharan and Narayanan,⁵ where tenures of 90 days or less were ignored. Thirdly, the percentages relate only to movement of personnel. They reveal nothing about whether posts were occupied or remained vacant for a period between one officer leaving and another arriving. That can be an important matter for investigation, but it would require a separate analysis.

What can one learn from Table 2? Two main features stand out. First, Table 2 shows that, in any one year, the percentages of IAS officers who moved within the year vary from cadre to cadre; and the variations can be very substantial, as is the case with Haryana's 80 per cent and Nagaland's 39 per cent in 1977. Each cadre also differs as regards their average annual movement over the 10-year period, as Table 3 shows by averaging the percentages in Table 2.

Table 3 suggests that annual rates of movement tend to be higher in the heartland of north India, and comparatively low in the states of the rimland. West Bengal's rate is remarkably low. Clearly there is no evidence here of a general all-India pattern of IAS postings and transfers.

The second main feature shown by Table 2 is that annual rates of movement fluctuate through time. This is the case for every state cadre in the IAS. Furthermore, rates of movement for some state cadres fluctuate far more than others. The data show that the most erratic state cadres (ignoring Nagaland and Sikkim) during the period were Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. The Bihar variation was from 32 to 70 per cent. The least erratic were Maharashtra, Assam-Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala. Table 2 shows that the movement rate for the Maharashtra cadre was remarkably

Table 2 STATE-WISE MOVEMENT OF IAS CADRES 1977-86

(As on January 1 on these years)

Movement of IAS Cadres (N=1, Jan. 1977- 1, Jan. 1986)	Per cent who held their post for less than one year during									
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
ANDHRA PRADESH (193-280)	58	69	61	59	56	63	65	58	54	56
ASSAM-MEGHALAYA (98-159)	60	61	61	57	58	54	50	66	48	49
BIHAR (230-315)	60	64	57	48	69	32	62	58	47	70
GUJARAT (146-159)	66	59	43	43	61	54	47	50	44	56
HARYANA (103-155)	56	80	67	77	62	59	51	55	57	60
HIMACHAL PRADESH (69-97)	59	67	56	43	66	33	56	60	55	53
JAMMU & KASHMIR (77-64)	55	61	54	39	45	51	49	69	63	58
KARNATAKA (157-196)	54	68	53	45	73	41	58	71	40	55
KERALA (100-130)	45	45	53	51	57	49	60	53	44	50
MADHYA PRADESH (247-338)	45	49	54	36	59	57	52	65	55	58
MAHARASHTRA (216-282)	50	50	50	54	48	54	48	48	46	51
MANIPUR-TRIPURA (55-97)	33	60	64	42	44	52	47	52	48	59
NAGALAND (29-41)	45	39	84	42	88	33	50	66	56	51
ORISSA (133-178)	50	58	45	46	63	50	46	58	49	54
PUNJAB (125-158)	59	73	51	47	76	53	51	51	61	55
RAJASTHAN (151-203)	60	54	56	65	67	66	48	52	62	72
SIKKIM (- 39)	-	-	27	32	58	25	17	24	64	79
TAMIL NADU (179-242)	65	48	58	45	58	53	49	65	54	56
UNION TERRITORIES (110-158)	42	56	48	43	58	50	51	41	48	63
UTTAR PRADESH (318-456)	59	61	61	60	66	62	46	55	57	58
WEST BENGAL (202-233)	40	45	47	31	51	41	33	37	35	51

NOTES: See Notes in Table 1.

SOURCE: Same as for Table 1.

Table 3 PERCENTAGE OF STATE CADRE IAS OFFICERS
WHO HELD THEIR POST FOR LESS THAN ONE YEAR ON
AN AVERAGE FOR THE TEN-YEAR PERIOD 1976-85,

State	Percentage	State	Percentage
Haryana	63.11	Himachal Pradesh	54.11
Andhra Pradesh	60.33	Madhya Pradesh	54.00
Rajasthan	60.22	Tamil Nadu	54.00
Uttar Pradesh	58.33	Orissa	52.11
Punjab	57.56	Kerala	51.56
Nagaland	56.56	Gujarat	50.89
Bihar	56.22	Manipur-Tripura	50.10
Karnataka	56.00	Union Territories	50.00
Assam-Meghalaya	55.89	Maharashtra	49.89
Jammu & Kashmir	54.22	West Bengal	41.33

NOTE: The Sikkim cadre has been excluded.

SOURCE: Compiled from Table 2.

steady (the variation was from 46 per cent to 54 per cent only), and on this criterion that IAS cadre was in a class by itself. The variations through time for a majority of state cadres were substantial, however, and again suggest that there are no effective norms governing IAS postings and transfers that are consistently applied by state governments concerned.

It is perhaps worth emphasising that there is no evidence for the widely-held view that IAS movement is generally on the increase. Instead, there is fluctuation through time--rapid movement one year, less rapid the next. These fluctuations tending to fall generally (for the IAS as a whole) within a long-standing, steady band of 50-60 per cent annual movement. It is also not the case that IAS movement was slower in earlier decades. In 1959 and 1960, for example, the annual movement rates for the IAS as a whole were 53.14 and 53.43 per cent respectively.⁶ Such rapid movement was also experienced by ICS officers in the days of the British raj. Barlow (ICS, UP) arrived in India in November 1929 and was posted to Agra District; ten months later, as he was being transferred elsewhere, he wrote to his parents in England: "I shall be quite sorry to leave....people change so quickly out here that I feel quite like an old inhabitant".⁷ Macleod (ICS, Bombay) observed that the personnel of a 'station' were forever changing--"you are always travelling... packing and unpacking".⁸ The

Home Department in Delhi complained in 1936 that 66 per cent of all Collectors in British India had held their post for less than one year.⁹ There is nothing new about the rapid movement of India's administrative elite.

The general conclusion one reaches after examining the IAS mobility data reported in preceding paras is that during the 10-year period, movement has been very quick and erratic. Each year a majority of the Service shifts to another post. Yet such movement does not occur in a regular, consistent fashion. Individual IAS officers move erratically through time, i.e., he or she may hold a post for several years, then several others for very short periods. Different State cadres also have different rates of movement which fluctuate through time.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATORY FACTORS

The quick and erratic nature of IAS mobility patterns suggests something about their causes. Since rates are erratic, there can be no steady policy consistently governing IAS movement. The absence of that as an explanatory factor suggests that contingent factors must be at work. And a prime candidate for such a contingent factor which explains the erratic nature of the mobility is political interference, e.g., the erratic whims of a government minister or the erratic occurrence of an election bringing a new ministry to power, followed by wholesale IAS transfers.

Can the data on IAS mobility tell us anything about political interference as an explanatory factor? Curiously, the data suggest that political interference when ministries change may be less decisive in explaining IAS mobility patterns than many people think.¹⁰ The summary totals of annual IAS movement in Table 1 shows that mobility increased somewhat in the election years of 1977, 1980, and 1985. However, the data on movement patterns in each state cadre as shown in Table 2, do not support the view that particularly high rates of IAS transfers necessarily occur when new ministries are voted into power. In 1977, following the general election, which brought Janata to power at the Centre, Janata also won elections in six important states and assumed full control-- i.e., were not part of a coalition--while in four other states Congress(I) ministries remained in power; yet if one compares the percentages of IAS who moved in 1977 in these 10 states, one finds no consistent pattern of more IAS movement when governments changed. Indeed, the data suggest on the whole that there was rather more IAS movement in States where governments did not change (Haryana was a striking exception). Furthermore, there was a major change of government in West Bengal in

1977, when the Left Front, led by the Communist Party of India-(Marxist) took over from Congress (I), but the data in Table 2 show that this political change had little effect on IAS mobility in West Bengal.

In 1980, Congress(I) swept back to power at the Centre, and in most states where elections were held in May that year. The data in Table 2 show somewhat more IAS movement in states where a Congress (I) ministry replaced Janata: in five of the six states where Janata was replaced by Congress (I) in 1980 (Bihar, Haryana, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) the percentage of IAS who moved to a new post during that year was above the national average of 60 per cent. (The percentage for the sixth State, Madhya Pradesh, was 59). At the same time, however, there were two states where IAS movement was most pronounced--Punjab (76 per cent) and Karnataka (73 per cent), but there was no change of government in Karnataka. Similar equivocal conclusions about the relationship between change of government and IAS movement can be drawn from the data for the election year of 1985.

The data do not enable us to go much beyond this rather negative conclusion regarding the causes of IAS mobility patterns. The extent to which the erratic whims of individual ministers account for mobility patterns cannot be tested on the basis of these data. But I suggest there is enough in Table 2 to cast serious doubt on the proposition that you can simply "blame the politicians" for IAS movement, or explain IAS movement primarily in terms of political interference. At least as important has been the growth of the state, the consequent opening up of many new and attractive IAS posts, and ambitious IAS men and women scrambling for such posts. As Jain (IAS, Haryana) remarked in 1983: "Nowadays, and I can speak with confidence about the younger members of the Service, we start scheming over positings right from the beginning. We want to go to a particular district, a particular subdivision, and so on."¹¹ Certain urban districts are preferable to remote rural districts, the Board of Revenue is a 'parking lot' to be avoided, 'wet' posts (from which rupees pour) are more desirable than 'dry' posts, and so on. To get the 'right' post, IAS men and women lobby the Chief Secretary and other senior officials and discuss postings with relevant ministers. The erratic nature of this factor is perhaps the result of individual chief secretaries or ministers being more or less amenable to such lobbying. In short, my suggestion is that IAS initiatives are as important a cause of IAS movement as the so-called 'political interference'.

Other factors of importance are filling up of leave vacancies, shifting incompetent officers, rewarding others through promotion,

replacing others who have retired or died, etc. Each time this occurs, there are knock-on effects. Some other IAS officer has to move in to the post being vacated, and in doing so thereby creates another vacancy that must be filled. Whole chains of vacancies develop behind any one transfer, thereby quickening the general mobility still further. All these factors, however, are merely suggestions as to what may be involved in explaining IAS mobility. The data reported in this article throw some light on the matter, but no convincing explanation of IAS movement has yet been advanced. Further research on this important subject is needed.

ASSESSING IMPACT OF MOBILITY PATTERNS ON ADMINISTRATIVE PERFORMANCE

The rapid and erratic movement of the IAS is an important subject for research because it presumably has adverse effects on the performance capabilities of administrative organisation. I say 'presumably' because the subject so far has been largely unexplored in the literature. Texts on personnel administration in India virtually ignore it.¹² Similar texts in the USA and UK are also silent on the subject.

It is true that on this subject there is a general proposition that has been around for a long time in organisation theory. It says essentially that the higher the rates of personnel turnover, the lower the organisational efficiency. The relationship is almost certainly not as simple as that. The point is that we do not know if it is that simple because the proposition has not been tested empirically. To test it would require being able to measure and evaluate bureaucratic performance. The complexities involved in doing so are considerable, partly due to the inevitable intrusion of subjective elements when one is trying to assess performance. But it is not impossible. This is clear from Fried's major (and not widely known) attempt to assess bureaucratic performance in the USA.¹³

Although research on administrative consequences of rapid transfer has not been done, there is recognition of the importance of the problem for Indian administration. Wade, for example, has claimed that "any serious discussion of how India's development administration can be made to work better must put personnel transfers near the top of the agenda for reform".¹⁴ Chambers has called rapid transfers the "slipping clutch" of efforts to promote rural development because "they incapacitate field organisations of government".¹⁵ The Planning Commission explicitly urged state governments in the Sixth Five Year Plan not to transfer able collectors during the period of the Plan in order to ensure better implementation of development projects in districts,¹⁶ but this was whistling in the dark bearing in mind

the rapidity with which IAS collectors actually moved into and out of collectorships. It is not only in the realm of development administration that rapid transfers have been identified as an important problem. Purohit, for example, briefly drew attention in the early 1980's to the fact that the IAS were not able to provide effective leadership in sales tax administration because they moved too quickly.¹⁷

Research on administrative consequences of rapid and erratic movement of the IAS is needed because the consequences of administrative leaders flitting about so quickly from post to post may be very serious indeed. What, after all, is at the heart of administrative leadership? One general formulation put it this way: "to translate aspirations and ambitions, ideologies and ideals" of government "into policies, plans, programmes and projects and building up organizations and institutions to take charge of these plans and programmes, manning them with the personnel both competent and motivated and continuously leading, directing and coordinating their efforts so as to realize the objectives in view...."¹⁸ For me, two aspects of that formulation are crucial: (1) 'directing and coordination' or orchestrating the efforts of others, and (2) continuity of effort.

Administrative leaders attempt to orchestrate efforts of various specialist personnel towards achieving objectives of the organisation. Orchestration involves discipline, control, and mutual understanding based on building up of informal relations and confidence in one another's abilities. IAS mobility patterns make it exceedingly difficult for IAS officers, however able they may be as individuals, to orchestrate efforts of personnel in the organisations they lead. How can they lead, when they spend so little time in the organisation before moving on to another? One problem is that when there is no settled leadership, discipline slackens. Another is that building up informal relations and mutual confidence takes time; and IAS officers are rarely in place long enough for such relationships to develop.

Administrative organisations endeavouring to achieve certain objectives within a time frame are much more likely to succeed if there is continuity of expertise in their administrative leadership. It is well known that when an organisation is aiming to achieve an objective within a certain time frame, nothing can be more disruptive than for an administrative leader to vanish suddenly and be replaced by a newcomer. However able the newcomer may otherwise be, he or she cannot immediately acquire the organisational expertise so important to successful administrative leadership. Organisational expertise refers to such things as knowledge of the local area or set-up, acquaintance with particular norms and "ways of doing things" in the organisation, understanding of the special 'language' used in the

organisation, knowledge of background of (and rationale for) earlier decisions of central importance to the organisation's behaviour, and so on. Are IAS officers travelling too fast to acquire this type of expertise? Is it excessively disruptive to have a rapid succession of IAS leaders passing through administrative organisations? What effect does this have on performance?

It is also the case that administrative leaders who are highly motivated to achieve the objectives of the organisation are probably more effective than those who are not. Enthusiastic espousal of programme objectives by administrative leaders can motivate others in the organisation. On this score, it is hard to think of a better way to kill such motivation and enthusiasm than by frequent transfers. This is because high motivation is more likely to be maintained among administrative leaders when they can see the fruits of their efforts. IAS officers can be moved around so fast that these satisfactions are denied to them.

CONCLUSION

This article has advanced evidence showing rapid and erratic nature of IAS mobility patterns during the 10-year period 1977-85. The IAS provided during the period much of the administrative leadership throughout the country; and on average, a majority of them held a leadership post for less than 12 months before moving on, and less than 20 per cent stopped for two years or more. There was considerable variation between state cadres—West Bengal and Maharashtra stood out as cadres in which a majority stayed in post for more than one year, whereas the turnover of IAS in post was exceptionally swift in Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Such figures, overall, are quite extraordinary by any reckoning. An outsider with no knowledge of India's administrative tradition might be forgiven for exclaiming that this is no way to run a country. The question that has to be asked here is whether such mobility patterns adversely affect the capacity of the IAS to provide administrative leadership. This article has briefly essayed the possible consequences of rapid movement for orchestrated effort, continuity of expertise, and motivation, as key elements in what administrative leadership entails. Perhaps the consequences are adverse. Maybe rapid transfers are beneficial. We don't know. It is time for students of public administration in India to attempt to find out what the consequences of such rapid and erratic movement are for administrative performance.

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Relationship between Professional Specialists and Generalist Administrators in Nigerian Civil Service : A Critical Review

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THERE IS only one Nigerian Civil Service. Therefore, the distinction between professional specialists and generalist administrators has been made only for analytical purpose.

The term 'professional specialist' refers to persons skilled in a particular area of human endeavour as a result of long training, while the term 'generalist administrator' refers to persons whose education and training were broad based and so have no special skill in a particular area of human endeavour. These two categories of civil servants play complementary roles. However, conflicts arise either from the perception of each about role of the other or from difference in their occupational background. Attention in this study is focused on some of these conflicts to find justifications therefor, if any, in order to examine the level of understanding and harmony among the senior management cadre of the civil service which is crucial for formulation and execution of natural policies.

Origin of Conflict between the Two

Adebayo identifies its origin in the Civil Service Reorganisation of 1957.¹ Prior to that year, there were no ministries headed by ministers and Permanent Secretaries (PSs) as we now know them. The most senior professional occupied the position of head of department with the title of 'Director'. But with the reorganisation of 1957, the PSs, who became chief advisers to ministers were, in most cases, administrative officers. As a result, most of the senior professional officers became subordinates of the PS.

The situation aggravated further when professional officers in the department had to work under constantly changing PSs. They felt that for most of the time it is they on whom the department had relied for advice and continuity. They became bitter and showed resentment to a system which subordinates men with knowledge and expertise to chief executives, who were birds of passage. Adebayo notes, "in time, the professionals develop a superior and uncooperative attitude to their

Permanent Secretaries".²

Literature Review

Several writers have treated the subject with different nomenclatures. A common feature among them is that professionals are regarded as staff managers, subordinate to administrators, who are regarded as line managers.

Blau and Scott call them 'professionals' and 'bureaucrats'³; Gouldner refers to them as 'cosmopolitans' and 'locals' or 'experts' and 'executive group'.⁴ Etzioni regards them as 'experts' and 'managers'⁵; to Bentz they are 'experts' and 'bureaucrats'⁶ while Reissman refers to them as 'functional bureaucrats' and 'bureaucrats'.⁷

While the administrator is regarded as superior to the professional, the latter does not accept it and owes allegiance to his professional body which forms his reference group. Therefore, his positive or negative attitude toward the administrator is formed not on the basis of actual positive or negative interaction with the administrator but in terms of social distance of him as defined by the prevailing norms of his reference group.⁸ Moreover, one's continued standing as a competent professional often cannot be validated by members of his own organisation since they are not knowledgeable enough about it.

Gouldner sees the foregoing as some of the reasons why the professional is disposed to seek recognition and acceptance from outsiders, that is, an outer reference group not part of his employing organisation.⁹ This is, therefore, an indication that if, at all, the professional is to feel inferior or subordinate to anybody, it should be those performing the same professional job with him, not an administrator.

Professionals in the civil service face conflicting group norms on the same issue. Usually this emanates from the necessity to follow the civil service procedure while, at the same time, trying to maintain their professional norms. In the view of Sherif and Sherif, such professionals are caught now in a situation which favours behaviour in line with the norm or rule from one source and then in a situation which favours behaviour required by the opposite norm stemming from another source.¹⁰ This is a situation that Festinger calls cognitive dissonance—a psychologically uncomfortable (mental) state that calls for the need to achieve consonance.¹¹

Etzioni identifies mobility within the civil service as a discriminatory area which creates conflict between the administrators and their professional counterparts.¹² While many professionals remain more or less restricted to the same organisational functions, the

administrator is assigned to a large variety of tasks in what is called the process of broadening. This gives the administrator enhanced responsibility and status in the civil service.

METHODOLOGY

The Data Generating Question

The experiential accounts of the subjects were collected from the following question written on a card and the protocols verbatim recorded:

In giving the following information, please do not mention your name or your organisation's.

Kindly give an account, from your experience, why there are conflicts or disagreements often between professionals and generalist administrators.

The Approach

The protocols were analysed and interpreted, the research approach being phenomenology as against positivism.¹³ Both methods can be used for this study, but the advantage of the former over positivism is that while the positivist approach restricts respondents to given variables built into the questionnaire, phenomenology allows the respondents to give an unchannelled and unrestricted account of their experiences. This, in effect, brings out more variables hitherto unknown to the researcher.

The Subjects

The subjects were drawn from the senior management cadre of the Nigerian Civil Service and Protocols were collected from eight of them serving in different organisations. However, only four of the cases were selected for this study on the basis of better coverage of variables and lack of space.

Data Layout and Analysis

The column 1 in Tables 1 and 2 shows the verbatim-recorded accounts of experiences of the various subjects, while the column 2 shows interpretations of the accounts.

Table 1 PROTOCOLS FROM PROFESSIONALS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Protocols	Interpretations
(1)	(2)
CASE 1	
Usually, the administrators believe--not even belief--it is embeded in their scheme of service that they have all administrative powers and therefore under the cover of the PS who is overall boss, they tend to issue orders--" I am directed to"--whether they were directed to or not.	Absolute administrative powers to administrators.
They tend to issue orders to their professional counterparts irrespective of their grade level.	Seniority neglect in issuing orders.
The administrators tend to be too bossy and control everything.	Bossy administrators' excessive control.
They are selfish and grab powers.	Selfishness, power grabbing.
We have a situation where the top in the department, that is, an administrator, can ask you to give up your job and attend to him.	Disrespect to professionals.
If you go to government quarters, you find officers of the administrative line on salary grade level 09 occupying houses which grade level 15 professional officers cannot come by.	Staff welfare discrimination.
In the performance of normal administrative functions, the professional has no authority to promote, transfer or admonish even his professional colleagues who are under him without passing through the administration.	No administrative authority to professionals.
During the process of passing through the administration, administrative officers who are three to four grade levels or more junior to him frustrate such efforts (disciplinary) by taking counter decisions.	Junior administrators decide for senior professionals.

(1)	(2)
<p>On policy aspect of the professionals' discipline.</p> <p>For maintaining discipline among the professionals they demand on the finance division for financial control but cannot get the release except through administration.</p> <p>By that sole situation, the PS still controls the professionals' performance by insisting on how much money would be released, when it will be released and how it will be utilized finally.</p>	<p>Policy control.</p> <p>Financial control.</p> <p>Intrusion on professionals' schedule.</p>
<p>CASE 2</p> <p>I guess it is jealousy that causes the conflict because we have a profession but they don't have.</p> <p>They want to be financial managers which they cannot be. We cannot agree to that.</p> <p>They don't want to listen to our advice.</p> <p>They believe that since they are the owners of the place, this is what they want and we just have to take it like that.</p> <p>They don't allow the Accountant-General to function according to the rules and procedures.</p> <p>In my own ministry, the Accountant-General is accepted to be the Chief Accounting Officer and at the same time he is placed below another accounting officer (the PS) who is head of the ministry.</p> <p>Since he is under the PS, whatever the Accountant-General wants to bring up as suggestion is suppressed if it is not favourable to the administrators.</p> <p>Misplacement of hierarchy is the problem.</p>	<p>Jealousy.</p> <p>Resistance to role usurpation.</p> <p>Non-adherence to professionals' advice.</p> <p>Rigidity over plans despite professionals' advice.</p> <p>Abuse of rules and procedures.</p> <p>Subordination of professionals to administrators</p> <p>Suppression of professional ideas by administrators.</p> <p>Misplaced hierarchy.</p>

Table 2 PROTOCOLS FROM ADMINISTRATION AND INTERPRETATIONS

Protocols	Interpretations
(1)	(2)
CASE 3	
They complain bitterly on promotion that administrative officers enjoy accelerated promotion more than the professionals.	Accelerated promotion.
As for welfare benefits, it is automatic--no discrimination whatsoever, I've never seen it.	Welfare benefits.
Now, as for the point of their being PS, I think, the idea was that they were not privileged. But since Udoji Review Commission, the sky is the limit. The professionals want to get the territory of the administrators.	Attainment of highest position.
Naturally, the administrators are to manage the administration and accounts and the professionals cannot take over this role. There is no issue of ambition about it.	Desire to usurp role.
Now, another thing is, and I seem to agree, that it is the posting of an administrator to a professional ministry. Naturally, they (professionals) have to complain.	Resistance to role usurpation.
The administrative officers on salary grade level 15 are sent to head professional officers on salary grade level 16	Making administrator head of professional ministry.
	Suppression of professionals by junior administrators.
CASE 4	
I happen to work in a ministry where the major areas of conflict in most cases stem from personality clash.	Personality clash.
Another area of conflict is envy.	Enviousness.
The mere fact that a senior professionals officer would come down to the administrator and ask for transport is what they don't take kindly to.	Requisition through juniors.
In some cases, the professionals don't	Deprivation of official

(1)

have any car attached to them.

Some professional ministries may tolerate long-serving civil servants than new entrants from outside the service. So, when he comes in, there is friction between him and the professional group. Initially, he leaves the power to rest with the professionals and later when he wants to take that power from them, they refuse and this creates friction.

When I came in, there was the problem of the PS trying to force her will on the professional head.

It's only that most professionals feel that they can do the job better than the administrator. It is a question of "I should really be there, not you".

Where the administration controls all facilities in the ministry and a head of division has to put up a requisition note to get his due.

In the Ministerial Tenders Board, the head of the administration or a representative of the PS is the Chairman even when a professional ministry is being discussed.

In most cases they (professionals) come in as advisers and not even as members. The professionals would want much responsibility attached to their position. They don't want much supervision from the administrators.

The administrators control resources of every ministry and allocate same.

In a professional ministry, you can be the head of a division for up to ten years, then somebody who passed through the same ministry as an Under Secretary (in the process of broadening) is re-posted there as a PS. You don't expect a good relationship between them.

(2)

car.

Inexperienced administrators appointed from outside the service.

Retrieval of delegated power.

Imposition of will on professionals.

Jealousy.

Control of facilities.

Administrators presiding during discussions on professional ministry.

Membership of Tenders Board.

Commensurate responsibility.

Close supervision.

Control of resources.

Supersession of professionals by junior administrators.

Table 3 INTERPRETATIONS FROM THE PROTOCOLS OF THE PROFESSIONALS AND ADMINISTRATORS

	Professionals			Administrators	
	Case 1	Case 2		Case 3	Case 4
Seniority neglect in issuing orders		Abuse of rules and procedures		-	-
Bossy administrators		-		-	Close supervision
Excessive Control		-		-	Control of facilities/resources
Power grabbing		-		Role claimed as natural	Retrieval of delegated power
Disrespect to the professionals		Misplaced hierarchy		-	Requisition through juniors
Staff welfare--discrimination		-		Welfare benefits	Deprivation of official car
Intrusion on professionals' schedule					Administrators presiding during discussion on professional ministry
Selfishness		Jealousy		-	Jealousy/enviousness
Selfishness		Resistance to role usurpation		Resistance to role usurpation	-
Non-adherence to professional advice		Non-adherence to professional advice		-	Imposition of will on professionals

No administrative authority to the professionals	—	Suppression of professional ideas by administrators	—	Making administrator head of professional ministry	—
	—		—	Supersession of professionals by junior administrators	Supersession of professionals by junior administrators.
Absolute administrative power to administrators	—		—	Attainment of highest positions	Inexperienced administrators appointed from outside the service
					Commensurate responsibility.
Policy control		Rigidity over plans despite professional advice.	—		—
Financial control		—	—		Membership of Tenders Board
Junior administrators decide for senior professionals	—	—	—		—
	—	Subordination of professionals to the administrators	—		Personality clash
	—		—	Accelerated promotion	—

Results

The interpretations having been collated in Table 3. Cases 1 and 2 given in the table represent interpretation from professionals while cases 3 and 4 give us the interpretation from the administrators-- all derived from the protocols recorded verbatim from the two group.

DISCUSSION

Table 3 provides a 'catalogue' of variables regarded as the conflict areas by both the professionals and the administrators. The discussion takes up the variable theme-by-theme but such variables that are considered self-explanatory will not be discussed for lack of space.

Seniority Neglect in Issuing Orders

Discipline is maintained in the civil service by seniority, either of grade level or number of years put in the service. It is an abuse of rules and procedures and indeed an insult when a junior officer issues orders to a senior colleague, his occupational position notwithstanding. A situation like this is capable of causing chaos and a breakdown of communication in the service. This situation naturally has to be resisted by whoever finds himself or herself at the receiving end.

Close Supervision

This state of affair occurs because the administrator who is not conversant with the technicalities of the professionals' job would want to be sure that operational mistakes are not made. The administrator who also happens to be the head of the ministry is accountable in the final analysis for whatever went wrong in that ministry. This has created an undesirable situation in which administrators 'breathe down' the shoulders of professionals. A healthier situation would have been that in which the professionals assume full responsibility for technical decision and PSSs must rely on their expert judgments in discharging their managerial responsibilities. Blau and Scott refer to Parson as agreeing that "only within a level can the superior supervise the work of subordinates and assume responsibility for it" because top management does not direct the work in the same sense that senior professionals direct the work of junior professionals.¹⁴ Since the administrators do not have the technical qualification to do so, why the close supervision?

Control of Facilities/Resources

At top level, every senior officer must be a manager with clearly

defined resources of men, money and materials at his disposal. It is also expected that at that level, what is important is the achievement of corporate objectives of the organisation and not the basic discipline of the officers or his specialised experience.

If a senior officer is subjected to the use of facilities/resources only on requisition, how can he plan ahead when there is no guarantee that the facility in question would always be available? One is able to control use and maintenance of facilities at his disposal than that which is for general use. Allocation of resources make for efficiency and a situation where one officer controls everything is very undesirable.

Role Claimed as Natural

In Case 3 of Table 3, the administrator claimed the role of managing the administration and accounts as being natural. In an attempt to retrieve any of the 'natural roles' from the professionals, the latter in Table 3, Case 1, sees the administrator as 'power grabbing'. Management is a profession but someone who possesses managerial ability, that is, planning, organising, integrating and measuring, can be assigned the job of a manager.

Professionals are equally educated as the administrators and both categories experience the decisions taken by the government on different kinds of issues. If the latter possess managerial ability by virtue of their education and exposure, why not the professionals who also work under the civil service and experience all the bureaucratic processes? Where then lies the justification for the claim to managerial role as 'natural' which the administrators do? Are the administrators asserting that professionals cannot reason logically?

Requisition Through Juniors

The administrator in Table 3, Case 4 sees this case as a 'mere' requisition through juniors. It may not occur to the administrator that it puts the professional in a weak position asking him or her to do what amounts to 'begging' through a junior officer. It is disrespect to the professional and a situation like this is very undesirable. For whatever purpose the channel of demand was designed, the professional on a senior management cadre should forward his request to his equivalent administrative counterpart who will then get the junior officer in charge to do it. In a case where a junior administrator intentionally does not want to honour the request of a senior professional officer, don't we envisage that the professional would report to a senior administrator for redress? Then this can be averted by dealing with officers on the same senior level. Disappointment at that level of interaction hurts less.

Staff Welfare—Discrimination

While the professional in Table 3, Case 1, accuses the administrators of discriminating in allocation of staff quarters, the administrator in Table 3, Case 3 denies the allegation. However, since it probably falls within the administrator's schedule of duty to allocate staff quarters and even official cars, one cannot rule out the possibility of a junior administrative officer reserving such benefits for himself before a senior professional gets one. This could be traced back to the shortage of such amenities in the Nigerian society. Therefore, it is an undesirable situation which may not change until the standard of living of the society improves.

Intrusion on Professionals' Schedule

Etzioni states that the expert typically deals with symbols and materials while the manager deals with people.¹⁵ Several authors also believe a similar thing to be the functions of the professionals and administrators respectively. Granted that this is an undisputed position, how is it that administrators perform both functions at the same time? In Table 3, Case 1, the professional notes that even money approved for professional functions would not be disbursed unless the administrator decides on how much money would be released, when and how it will be released.

Even in the Ministerial Tenders Board, which is purely professionals' affair, the administrator in Table 3, Case 4 admits that administrators preside during discussions on professional ministry. Many a time, the latter come in as advisers, not even members. This situation was testified to by Adebayo as being the case¹⁶. However, Ridley notes that it is not just a question of asking for advice. One has to know what sort of advice to ask for, what the problems are, and the specialist is more likely to identify these as part of his work. Ridley concludes his view on this subject by asserting: "If the expert can put this advice into language comprehensible to the lay administrator, he could presumably be understood by ministers and the public without the intervention of the generalist administrator".¹⁷

Resistance to Role Usurpation

The professional in Case 2 and the administrator in Case 3 have each mentioned their roles and they overlap in some areas. While the professional claims such roles (and justifiably too) by virtue of training, the administrator claims such roles as 'natural endowment'. It is very difficult to prove competence by natural endowment whereas that by certificate issued by a recognised institution is held valid everywhere. Perhaps all the professionals and administrators

occupying senior management positions in the civil service need an advanced management course available in many management training institutions in Nigeria. Where they cannot afford to stay away from the officer for more than one week, tailor-made courses on the role of these two categories of civil servants can be organised for them. Certainly, professionals and administrators have separate roles to perform.

Imposition of Will on Professionals

Non-adherence to professional advice reported by the professional in Table 3, Case 2, has resulted in the accusation of imposition of will on professionals. There is the feeling that since the professional is only playing an advisory role to the PS, the latter is not duty bound to accept the advice. Administrative considerations tend to conflict with technical professional considerations. Hence, Blau and Scott note that the judgement of superiors, who are concerned with administrative problems, will recurrently differ from the judgement of their professional subordinates who are concerned with technical problems.¹⁸ Here again, we are back to the question that cropped up during our discussion on close supervision, since the administrators do not have the technical qualification. If there is any cogent reason for insisting on a administrator's decision, it should be put in clear and humble terms, and not with a bossy approach. Also, such decisions should not encroach on professional competence but should be based on administrative considerations.

No Administrative Authority to the Professionals

In Table 3, Case 1, professionals record that they have no authority to promote, transfer or admonish even a professional colleague except through the administration. The Public Service Review Commission has recommended a complete integration of all senior management posts within a ministry into one pyramid, so that particular aspects of the work of a ministry should no longer be the particular assignment of any class of officer.¹⁹ It is doubtful what a professional can achieve if he or she cannot admonish a subordinate. This is like a case of assigning a job to an individual and at the same time taking away all the tools with which he or she can perform.

Another aspect of 'withdrawn authority' on the professional is the making of administrators head of professional ministry. If by 'head of ministry' we mean the PS, then it should be realised that the PS is responsible for achievement of specified programmes in the national plan within a given budget and by specified time. In other words, the PS deals with policy matters and not day-to-day running of

the ministry. In this regard, any manager can be assigned to any ministry to achieve good results. But what is the guarantee that the professional head, who specialised in civil engineering, would be effective on matters concerning mechanical engineering. Yet these two aspects of engineering come under one ministry.

Therefore, the problem is not solved merely by replacing an administrator with a professional as PS because, as Adebayo said, "the problem of friction and tension among senior officials in a Department is not a one-way issue between generalist administrators and professionals. It exists among the professionals themselves".²⁰

Supersession of Professionals by Junior Administrators

An average civil servant hopes to get to the top of the hierarchy before retirement. A situation where a relatively junior administrative officer in the service is posted as the Chief Executive in a ministry, superseding professional officers, is very frustrating. Worse still when such postings concern an officer who had at one time served in the same ministry during the usual process of broadening. The question that professionals ask is, why can't a professional officer, who has been heading a division in that ministry, be made the Chief Executive of that ministry?

Certainly, every civil servant cannot attain the highest rank in the civil service before retiring and this ought to be realised by all civil servants. However, preferential appointment of any class to this position is counter productive.

Attainment of Highest Positions

This area of conflict has been ameliorated by the recommendation of the Public Service Review Commission which concluded that the best way to remove tension between administrators and professionals regarding unequal opportunities for advancement on the other, is by the introduction of a unified grade structure.²¹ In this case, the lowest graded employee can advance to the highest post provided he or she has what it takes to get there. The administrator in Case 3 accepts the privilege which the administrators had over the professionals but notes that since the Review Commission quoted above, sky is the limit for any category of civil servants. Moreover, the highest position in the civil service has been servants. Moreover, the highest position in the civil service has been politicised, thus, bringing in other considerations in such appointments, making one's chances unpredictable.

Commensurate Responsibility

Just as we use the size of one's desk and office accommodation to

measure his or her importance in a bureaucratic organisation, the strategic importance of one's responsibility depicts one's importance in the civil service. Senior officers, therefore, cherish adding more 'powerful' duties to their schedule, to enhance their status. Under such duties, they can issue orders by writing 'I am directed to' as the professional in Case 1 notes. However, there are also some professionals, confined to their areas of specialisation irrespective of their grade level, who discover that they control an insignificant proportion of the ministry. They require job enrichment to match their status.

Policy/Financial Control

If the professional should confine himself to the provision of specialist advice on which the administrator will take decision, it then becomes evident that top administrative career is closed to the professional. But this is against the recommendation of the Public Service Review Commission 1974 which was approved by the government.

The arrangement under which financial and overall policy control lay with the administrator, while advice on technical aspects and execution were vested in the professional head, bred inter-class conflict, delays and inefficiency. He who pays the piper, they say, dictates the tune. Therefore, if the administrators are controllers of policy and finance, it is to the detriment of the professionals. There is no basis for such a situation. Each group should control its area of specialisation.

Junior Administrators Decide for Senior Professionals

There is no reason why junior administrators cannot decide on disciplinary matters for their senior professionals provided they follow the laid down rules and procedures. Junior administrators can even consult the senior professional who brought the matter before taking decision. It is discouraging to vest disciplinary powers on the administrators who in the final analysis may let erring officers go unpunished or unadmonished. This weakens the position of the professional in maintaining discipline within his or her department. Apparently, the Public Service Review Commission had this in mind when it recommended that particular aspects of the work of a ministry should no longer be the particular assignment of any class of officer. This should be pursued.

Accelerated Promotion

Promotion in the civil service is based solely on vacancy. The administrative class tend to have different kinds of posts resulting in constant 'filling-up'. However, the job of the professional is so

streamlined that posts are limited. The tendency to promote administrators faster than the professionals, therefore, could not be intentional. Professional positions are so precise while administrative positions have several dimensions. This creates several posts and vacancies leading to accelerated promotion for the administrators.

The Processes by Which Civil Servants Establish Areas of Conflict: Implications

While performing the day-to-day activities of a civil servant, certain processes go on in the consciousness of both the professionals and administrators. It is by these processes that they establish areas of conflict with other civil servants. These processes include comparison-making, anticipation, and contentedness.

By comparative process, each category of civil servants finds out the relative ease of difficulty with which positions are attained, resources obtained and memoranda approved for the other class. By anticipation, targets are set either for achievement of personal/official goals, and the degree of success or failure achieved prepares the individual on what to anticipate in the future. The process of contentedness takes care of how satisfied or unsatisfied the civil servant feels on present status and occupation.

The implication of these processes is that the government does not realise what the outcome of its pronouncement concerning its *modus operandi* would be, until officers on the senior management cadre start interacting and living through these processes. The resultant reactions could either be conflict or smooth execution of government policies.

This calls for careful consideration and consultation before matters affecting the ego of the individuals are decided upon.

CONCLUSION

Conflict between the professionals and administrators has been with the Nigerian Civil Service for about three decades and its continued existence negates smooth administration required in the provision of infrastructure for social, economic and political development. The administrators cannot achieve this objective nor could the professionals give of their best without commensurate authority and policy control.

Human and material resources meant for operation of any occupational group should be placed under direct control of the head of such a group to enhance efficiency. There could be some overlaps in functions but conflicts arising from such areas could be eliminated by making it mandatory for senior civil servants to attend

courses on organisational behaviour or advanced management, where views on role performance are shared. While expecting to attain the highest position before retirement, senior civil servants should realise that only very few can achieve this ambition.

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Alienation Theory and Research*

HARSHAD R. TRIVEDI

THOUGHT-WEAVES of Marx spreading through the length and breadth of the world have added new dimensions to understanding socio-economic relationships of emerging society of today from the hoary past. This has been a unique phenomenon in the history of man.

Marx, the thinker and philosopher has lived for over a century and has received well-deserved praise, but it seems that time for him is waning. If we use objective standards to judge his contributions, we may conclude that Marx is rapidly becoming irrelevant for explaining and understanding changes ushered in by global explosion of knowledge and technology in relation to various manifestations of alienation in human relations and social organisations. The new age has set in which seems to put an end to the application of his thoughts for understanding human development. Change was conceived by him in terms of linear progress, and it has turned out to be a limiting factor for understanding development.

Going back to thousands of years of man's existence, we are able to reconstruct how man progressed in tune with his social and economic development from the stage of animism and spiritualism to the present stage of naked materialism. Continents and territories were then divided by physical as well as mental barriers. Over this vast time-scale, many curtains of success and failures of man have fallen on the panorama of human development. The earliest stage started with primitive man and his stone-age technology of crude conception. This was followed by the stage of post-primitive culture of considerable value to human development. It is during this twilight zone of change that man discovered use of fire, potter's wheel and clay, foodgrains, wood, cotton, metal, etc. Various forms of material cultures of man developed on account of man's ability to learn, retain knowledge and invent means and devices to live more

*This is a revised version of a paper on the theme presented to XI World Congress of Sociology held in New Delhi in 1986.

comfortably than ever before. Marx, being preoccupied with economic problems of his times, realised that the have-nots are subject to exploitation of their labour. This genuine concern for fellow beings made him overlook, to begin with, the positive role of division of labour and cooperation. He forgot that the hardship of man, in the pre-historical growth perspectives, has paved the way to human progress.

One cannot wish away the developmental problems of the primitive man. The pre-historic stage was followed by proto-historic and historic civilisation of remote and recent past. A host of new discoveries, inventions and technologies have come into existence giving rise to newer tools and techniques. The recent phases of rational and scientific human progress initiated in the Western world have percolated to the life-styles of other countries. Today, they have created global impact of the new culture of man on an unprecedented scale. As a result, it is possible to conclude that most nation states under the banner of United Nations Organization are existing with one another on symbiotic and interdependent relationships. This is true both in physical and intellectual sense. Emotionally, however, we, as human beings, are estranged in many ways due to various kinds of cultural differentiations.

With the boom in the manifestations of industrial civilisation all over the world, we have nearly forgotten the pre-industrial ethos and have entered at once atomic, outer-space and star war age. Here, we have come closer to the era of post-industrial society of the prior and later periods of overlapping time-scale and phases of development. The time for crossing over the threshold of the post-industrial age of today is imminent. The upheaval of knowledge explosion is too strong to be mitigated easily. It seems we have reached a stage in global affairs when all racial stocks of people can be treated to be as strong or as weak as any other, irrespective of their stage of technological or military equipment. This is because the act of technology transfer and international aid in a broad sense is easy to be acquired anywhere in the world of today. It may prove to be for good or evil of mankind. Since all sections of society or peoples of the world are not capable of changing at almost the same rate and tempo in all walks of life, many areas of differentiation*

*According to C.C. North, "the significant social differences fall in four types: namely differences of function, differences of rank, differences of culture and differences of interest. A full theory of social differentiation would explore the causes and dynamics of these and other social differences. "See, J. Gould and W.L. Kolb (Eds.), *A Dictionary of Social Sciences*, The Free Press, 1965, p. 199.

have arisen between various components of human actions leading to conscious or unconscious processes of alienation in human relationships at different levels of social existence.

Consciousness of the Alienation Process

We shall presently concentrate our attention on mundane aspects and later deal with philosophical and theological aspects of alienation. It is pertinent to ask as to when did the thinking man become seriously aware of the process of alienation in the sense in which it emerged as a crucial point in the productive force of human development. A common sense meaning of the term alienation refers to the process of separation between any form or essence of property and the person possessing the same. This implies acceptance of the rule that a person with inherent potentiality to produce material objects has the fundamental right over the property in his charge or that given to him or acquired by him. It further admits quasi-legal or legal rights of a person to possess objects of human labour in society. There can be intangible forms also of property transference in accordance with emotional and sentimental ties of producers, their thought-processes and extra-sensory perception. But this issue is besides the point at present.

It will be naïve to overlook the achievements of ancient civilisations of Egypt, Mexico, China, Maya, India and many other little and great traditions of the world. The modern versions of these civilisations are to be found in the form of large and small nations who have attained membership of the UNO. When the pre-industrial man imparted latent symbolic or vocational education to his descendants through multiple products of labour, he was probably not conscious of the process of alienation vis-a-vis the quality or essence of the intrinsic property inherited or internalised by them in the course of disseminating knowledge and producing wealth.

Abstract Dimensions and Analytical Perspective

The relevance of alienation concept and theory of Marx is explained in the context of separation and contradiction of man from intangible property to begin with. The consequent manifestations of alienation in tangible form result out of experience and exercise of man's mental and physical labour. Man's finite being is mutable and has the capacity to multiply in various forms expressed in the production of his labour. Even social systems are mutable entities having internal contradictions and elements of conflict which work for human progress. The conflict situations are relatively more prone to alienation than harmony or equilibrium situations although both are impregnated with the capacity for human development.

Conflict either proceeds differentiation between two social entities and persons or succeeds and gives rise to differentiation. Conflict can also accelerate differentiation between social entities under various disagreeable conditions. This means that the root cause of alienation between social entities and elements is differentiation besides many other contributory or derivative-cum-contradictory causes. The concept of alienation, thus, taken as a consequence of differentiation, attains the status of a meta-concept impregnated with philosophical undertones also. In brief, differentiation is the mother of alienation which arise out of contradictory relations between various social entities and elements or between man and man. Going a step further, we may say that the mother of contradiction is discontinuity at various levels of understanding which leads to conflict. Alienation is, thus, an interdepending link between differentiation and discontinuities* leading to contradiction and conflict in human relationships.

We shall keep this analytical perspective in mind while reflecting upon what some of the previous scholars and analysts have written on the subject. These reflections are presented in relation to structural manifestations of alienation process at micro, meso and macro levels of specific value orientation of groups and larger social systems of man.

Philosophical and Theological Dimensions (Micro Dimension)

Differentiation-discontinuity syndrome can be profitably employed to explore under-currents of alienation in the spheres of philosophy and religion. Plotinus, the philosopher, has defined alienation as a process of the finite being's emanating from a common supreme source or principle leading to multiplicity of realities. This process of emanation of the supreme one cannot be traced under any sense in the upper regions of reality except in the lower spheres of material existence. It means that, at micro-level, the concept of alienation indicates downward shift in the process of emanation. The matter is an antithesis of the supreme one, and the lowest stage of the universal existence of being in the crude material world. The status

* This term was used by Ruth Benedict in a paper she published in 1938 in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 1, which was printed in *Personality and Nature, Society and Culture*, edited by C. Kluckhohn and H.A. Murry, 1949, revised edition 1953. Benedict contrasts continuities and discontinuities in terms of cultural conditioning. "...In modern industrial societies there are variations within the society, some of them according to class membership." *A Dictionary of Sociology*, G.D. Mitchell (Ed.), London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, pp. 57-58.

change, from one stage of being to another, occurs because of differentiation that takes place in the process of emanation or change in the finite being acquiring infinite manifestations. The process of differentiation can lead to discontinuities in social relationships which in the context of social status of individuals signify estrangement and loss of being.¹

Religious values, attitude and behaviour of individuals and groups are capable of alienating man from his true essence and being. This gives rise to behavioural manifestations of a religious man and to that extent, it enters into the domain of anthropology which deals largely with the interrelationships of body and mind of man. It was Feuerback who transformed certain elements of Hegel's thought on alienation by indicating areas of differentiation in human behaviour. Marx used these ideas as a starting point for presenting his own economic ramifications on this subject.² In the writings of Marx, the concept of alienation assumed an earthly existence wherein value, attitude and behaviour of man towards productive labour were considered significant aspects of worldly progress. It is here that the whole world of material progress of man was examined in historical perspective. Human labour has been the source of material progress of man. But whether man of power evaluated others' labour in terms of self-estrangement worthy of reward was a matter to be seriously discussed at a later stage in human progress.

Self, Nature and Human Labour (Meso Dimension)

In the context of human labour and its product, Marx emphasised the need for a radical transformation of values, attitudes and behaviour that would permit man to lead a truly human existence.³ Here we have to account for introduction of differentiation between religion of humanity and what may be called man's split personality without which it may not be easy to judge human progress. By interpreting alienation of human labour as the phenomenon of separation of self from the product of labour, and self from nature or the finite one, Marx saw the inevitability of differentiation in human relationships as well as supernatural ones. Furthermore, Marx gave a new dimension to alienation by expanding its concern, right from the individual, his spirit and his creative ability, and, finally, to those who impose control over him and his product in the form of economic relationships. Social reality of action was, thus, transformed into two basic categories of those who produced wealth out of self-labour and those who consumed or used the same in the ways unintended by the producers.

At meso level, so to say, alienation as a concept assumed a new dimension from ontological to sociological field of human concern

through materialistic approach to life. When man works in such a manner that his true nature gets alienated in the product of labour, his capacity to feel at home comes in conflict with those who buy the product of his labour to exploit him. Rationalisation of human activity and specialisation of jobs are at the root of alienation, but Marx did not like to favour such a situation to develop in human relationships. His revolutionary humanism desired to do away with the process of exploitation of human labour leading to alienation. He believed that in a higher phase of development of socialist or communist society, not only enslaving subordination of individual to division of labour disappears, but even the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears.⁴

Illusion of Human Progress (Macro Dimension)

It is interesting to note here that Marx was probably of the opinion that human development shall assume linear process of social change. Many thinkers have shared this illusion, but as we cross over from one phase of rational and scientific development of man to the other, we find that life, whether materialistic, theological or philosophical, becomes more complex, making it difficult for man to attain romantic cravings for harmony. The emancipation of man from the burdens of the past due to technological development, has remained only a dream. The process of rationalisation and metaphysical perspectives of human development at macro-level are not the certainties on which man can pin his hopes for the future. The human experience so far indicates as follows: "The alienation of labour as the self alienation of man from his essence is a concept that presents considerable intellectual difficulties, and in any case it fails to satisfy the emotional needs of societies newly launched upon the adventure of modernization".⁵

It will be pertinent to discuss here Sorokin's comments on the concept and theory of alienation. He thinks that if the mode of production alone is said to determine social, political and spiritual processes of life, then, it emphasises one-sided conception of causal relation. This, according to him, is a fallacy, because it is not possible for one factor, viz., economic need of man, as the most important one that determines all other factors. Factors like geographical condition, biological drive, intelligence, experience, religious ideas, superstitions, social taboos, etc., also form both realistic and idealistic dimensions of human existence. "Furthermore, we can not say that among man's inherent drive or instincts, there is only one instinct of food, or even that it is the strongest. Such an assumption is likely to be fallacious speculation not warranted by facts."⁶ While commenting on the class theory of Marx,

Sorokin points out that human relations do not pre-suppose antagonism of economic classes alone, because antagonisms of other kind based on racial spirit, national pride, religious ideas, ruling powers, etc., also play important role in alienating persons and groups from one another if not from the self and spirit of man. It may, however, be pointed out that most of the above-noted entities are, by and large, culturally differentiated entities and are radically different from economic or materialistic situations associated with alienation of man from his nature and labour.

Many eminent scholars and thinkers have also tried to find out socially relevant meaning of the term alienation. Nietzsche, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, etc., have exercised their minds to arrive at a scientific understanding of this concept. Limitation of space does not permit us to discuss their contributions in detail. In most of the recent writings, the sociologists in particular, have tried to discover the potential of the concept of alienation for empirical research.⁷ These discoveries are as under:

- (A) At micro-level, Seeman (1959) has separated the meaning of alienation into five components, viz.: (i) powerlessness, (ii) meaninglessness, (iii) normlessness, (iv) isolation, and (v) self-estrangement.
- (B) At meso-level, Barakat (1969) has seen alienation in the context of normative and behavioural stages. These are identified as the sources: (i) at normative structure level in society, (ii) as psychological property of groups, and (iii) as consequences of group and individual behaviour. We find also that Samuel Keen (in Mauley, 1969) divided the phenomenon of alienation into diverse social relationships concerning speech, promises, civility, hope for future, etc., essential for social life.

More or less in the same vein, Scott (1965) indicates that alienation can be seen as: (i) lack of commitment to values, (ii) absence of conformity to norms, (iii) loss of responsibility in roles, and (iv) deficiency in control of physical ease. All these are the numerous states or conditions in which individuals are to be found to exist in society at one time or the other. It will be useful to mention that Josephson suggested such conditions to be precisely differentiated situations encountered in the society. It may be noted that these differentiated situations are at the root of human alienation as they involve discord in two-way relationships.

- (C) Feurer (1963, pp. 137-40) gives five modes of alienation at macro-level. These are alienation of: (i) class society, (ii) competitive society, (iii) industrial society, (iv) racial groups, and (v) generation groups.

In view of Hegel's scheme of alienation and periodisation in human development, Marx also suggested different modes of society which are quoted here: "Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal and the modern bourgeois modes of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society".⁸

The macro-view of Feurer about societal level of alienation discussed here, more or less coincided with Hegel's conception as to how human development takes place.

Class Division and Social System

It seems reasonable to believe that the process of alienation and differentiation is inseparable from values, attitude and behaviour of man. Accepting this as a matter of fact, one may say that the element of differentiation is to be found in all human actions which are directed, by and large, for making and using objects or products of human labour. This means that the human labour forms the main thrust of social life. In the process of doing labour, human energy and the self is transformed into goods and services which are at the root of the creative purpose of man. Once these objects are created, the individual producer may not be able to determine whether the urge for making it, and purpose for which it is used, do coincide. This is because changes in time and place of making the material objects does not remain constant as they get differentiated from both the essence of the makers as well as their objects. Such a process of differentiation leads to discontinuity in the purposeful awareness of the creator of the object and the object itself. The manifestations of alienation outlined earlier at micro-level become meaningful directly in this context, but their relevance at meso and macro levels of social reality are equally important.

Marx circumscribed his concern of alienation to products of unorganised as well as organised human labour. He did not bother about the existence of alienation in other spheres of human relationships of non-materialistic nature. Therefore, he linked alienation to "the mode of production, in general, and to the property system of capitalism, in particular".⁹

Marx did not accept Hegel's assertion that alienation is the eternal condition of man and that the proper estate of man is the locus and agency of action. He, thus, rejected the alienation theory at the anthropological species level where the universal dilemmas of

man as actor are explored in order to understand the problem at a more concrete societal level. Marx speculated that over a long period of historical development of man, as and when capitalism is supplanted by socialism, alienation will come to an end and shall be a matter of by-gone days. The ideology of socialism, thus, dominated the thinking and imagination of Marx to such an extent that he saw one way cause-effect relationships of economic nature and thereby fell into the fallacy of linear theory of social change and material development. Apparently, this made Marx's concept and theory of alienation more powerful in appeal but it did not provide any solution to eternal dilemma of man. In any case, it is true that he was able to transform his ideology into the world politics based on socialistic society with ample scope of regard and equity in the division of labour and mutual cooperation in the formation of material wealth.¹⁰

Commenting on the significance of division of labour, leading to exploitation of labour and its consequent alienation from man, Gouldner rightly asserts that technological forces shall put these arguments of alienation to naught. He says that, if division of producers into classes has a certain historical justification, it has this only for a given period of time. This situation had no doubt developed upon the insufficiency in the means and mechanisms of production. Therefore, his conclusion is that the problem of alienation of labour "will be swept away by the complete development of modern productive forces".¹¹

It is not certain whether anthropology ignores formulation of class division of society, especially in favour of stratified society. Again, stratified society need not be a capitalist society in the modern sense made up of highly organised economic institutions. Be as it may, alienation of the privileged few as against numerically dominant classes, and vice versa, is a situation of differentiated nature. Since the acquisition, not productive ability of the two, rarely match totally or partially with one another, they stand on different platforms and this is the reason of mutual alienation experienced by them. As further elaborated by Gouldner, "... alienation persists because persons receive (or I may add, because differentiation continue to influence) the conditions under which they live from an earlier generation as a historical legacy at first experienced as part of their natural environment--i.e., as traditional activity--which they simply live, rather than reflect upon or question. Here, the unity of the species is differentiated over time, rather across class lines, instead of being exploited by a ruling class, men are here dominated by previous generations, who impose forms of life that, in time, are out of keeping with the needs

and experiences of the new period".¹² The time referred to here by Gouldner is, I think, made up of centuries and not of decades. In this perspective, elements of differentiation in the relationships of human species is bound to multiply over time and lead to a series of stages of alienation. "In some part, then, social systems generate and sustain alienation because they confront man as a presented givenness, and they do this because they are the products of a history, of a past that lives in the present".¹³ This leads us to assert that alienation persists because differentiation is at its root.

Again, as Gouldner puts it, Marx, "has several accountings for the persistence of alienation--One centres on class division of society...dominated by the ruling class,....So that its ideas dominate even the consciousness of those who are most alienated. A second answer is that both are commonly dependent on and constrained by the social system....A third consideration relates to the fact that,...society and culture...do not usually come into focus as either problematic or potentially changeable."¹⁴ It is, thus, clear that there has been no attempt by scholars to understand differentiation between opposite entities either in terms of class division, stratified social system or normative culture of a society under examination.

The manifestations of alienation or differentiation in capitalist system were changing in a big way during Marx's own time as discussed by Daniel Bell. Marx was aware that the "growth of a large-scale investment banking system and the emergence of the Corporation had begun to transform the social structure of capitalist society".¹⁵ The old middle class of farmers, artisans, and independent professionals were more or less pushed into background by the new middle class of managers, technical employees, white-collar workers and the like. The society was developing differentiation in structural relations. Firstly, the banking system was based on savings of the society as a whole; secondly, the Corporation separated ownership from management, which became by itself a class of superintendents; and thirdly, these two changes created expansion of office personnel due to differentiation in role-relationships and specialisation. Not only this, "the capitalist becomes removed from the process of production, the manager is alienated from his own labour and profits assume a social character".¹⁶

Social System and Institutional Order

Mitchell's dictionary of sociology (1969) provides a useful guide for further discussion on alienation.¹⁷ We are aware that the term alienation as a concept is widely used in a variety of disciplines.

Some of these are sociology, social and political philosophy, psychoanalysis, existential philosophy, etc. In sociology, its use is rather amorphous and loses its vigour and, therefore, does not succeed in explaining the crux of social problems. The contemporary issues, such as ethnic prejudice, mental illness, passive or aggressive class consciousness, industrial conflict, political apathy and extremism are no doubt differentiated situations which call for special attention. As indicated earlier, Seeman arrived at operational meaning of alienation, but as we shall see later, the need of going deeper into the meaning of the term was not fully satisfied. Erich Fromm understood alienation as a condition when a man failed to experience the richness of his powers and felt that he was dependent on external powers in the society.

According to some scholars, Seeman's postulates to render this term free from value assumptions is meaningless, because they think that value judgements about the quality of life ought to be made in sociology.¹⁸ If we grant the above mentioned assumption, it may become a tall claim on our part to call sociology a science where a high degree of objectivity is expected. The belief, that alienation is not akin to the phenomenon of monologue, seems to be reasonable.* It is a ceaseless process of action between two or more social elements or entities at micro, meso or macro levels in a social system. Manifestations of alienation within the ambit of limited and specific organisational context at macro-level are easy to understand. It is natural, therefore, that some scholars have concentrated their attention to study this phenomenon within circumscribed areas of human action. However, since the anatomy of no one human action is comparable with the other, degrees of differentiation are bound to appear in a wide range of social relationships which lead to nothing but situation-relevant alienation.¹⁹ This indicates that alienation is not only a subjective condition at any one level of action in human behaviour, but also an objective condition in a wider range of social relationships.²⁰

In the institutional ordering of social system, Marx thought that if private ownership of means of production is eliminated, it may be possible to put an end to formation of any class leading to the process of alienation in social relationships. "For Weber, the Marxist model, though a source of fruitful hypothesis, was too simple to handle the complexity of social stratification. He, therefore, sought to differentiate among various sources of hierarchical differentiation and potential cleavages. The two most important sets of

*The symbol printed on the Newsletter of Alienation Theory and Research seems to be of limited relevance in this context.

hierarchies for Weber were class and status."²¹ As we know, the process of class and status formation in a society arise out of differentiation between concerned social elements and entities involved in social relationships. The consciousness about class and status of individual or groups in relation to social institutions seems to have originated on account of more than one reason. "Rather, which groups develop a consciousness of common interest opposed to those of another group is a specific empirical question; different groups acquire historical significance at different times and in different places..."²² This indicates that the structure of economic relationships alone is not and cannot be the cause of emergence of class-consciousness. Since consciousness of each class or group cannot be identical in its varied manifestations, the differentiated elements between various groups are bound to activate themselves and operate significantly at the root of alienated social relationships.

Max Weber found that feeling of alienation among those who are working in administration and bureaucracy is sometimes more severe than among the daily wagers and labourers-bonded or otherwise. Formalism of bureaucracy makes social relationships estranged and a person gets the experience of having his autonomy destroyed. The main reason of this is the preponderance of impersonal or differentiated social relationships in bureaucratic set-up. "Alienation inherent in bureaucracy is, for Weber, independent of system of property relations. Socialism means more rather than less alienation, because it involves more bureaucratization. There is little difference between capitalist and socialist societies in their class relations and their propensity to alienation. The source of alienation lies in bureaucracy, which is inherent in industrial society."²³ Moreover, bureaucracy is, by and large, differentiated from the masses of the people in a society, irrespective of the kind of ruling state in power.

It is significant to note that the socialist societies may or may not be highly bureaucratic according to Bottomore. Even there, the bureaucratic power is not unopposed or unrestrained. "Weber's assertion about the connection between all forms of socialism and bureaucracy cannot be true."²⁴

Since Weber's analytical frame of reference on process of alienation was broader and was meant to cut through all social systems, he influenced a wide variety of intellectuals, such as Erich Fromm, David Reisman, William H. White, Robert K. Morton, Arnold Green and C. Wright Mills. Weber's assertion that all complex societies lead to no positive moral solutions makes his formulations highly critical of moral values in society. Weber thinks that individual autonomy and

absence of alienation is possible if people live in non-bureaucratized (and less differentiated) society of small producers.²⁵

In a recent discussion on alienation and bureaucracy, Karen Murphy observed, "The solution to alienation must be societal redesign and alteration of our present value system. A reduction of man's consumptive nature and transformation into his true two-dimensional existence is a necessary stage in the return of man to his essence and true consciousness".²⁶ In support of this statement, he analyses views of three contemporary thinkers, viz.: McWhinney, Illich and Ramos. First of them is of the view that we can take care of alienation if we so organise the community that it resembles a rural village providing shared specialised services.²⁷ Secondly, Illich recommends formation of convivial model institutions where informal learning networks provide a mechanism of bringing likeminded individuals together and sharing common interests.²⁸ Thirdly, "Ramos delineated a para-economic model based on the notion of organisation delimitation and premised on the assumption of the market being a necessary but limited and regulated social enclave."²⁹ It may be mentioned that the sum total of these views concur with Max Weber's suggestion to create small producers' societies to avoid the evils of bureaucratisation of human society, and thereby escape harmful impact of alienation in social relationships.

Epistemological and Ontological Perspective

We have earlier tried to discuss several manifestations of the concept of alienation and related theoretical frames of reference. Nevertheless, the discussion has not been conclusive. What is attempted in this section is to arrive at some agreeable perspective subject to further investigation in future.

Specific issues of the nature of human society are investigated and time-honoured, broad valuable generalisations have already been made by some outstanding scholars. It will be pertinent to take note of some of their relevant contributions before we make certain observations of epistemological and ontological perspective of alienation.

Reflecting upon basic two models of human society, Bottomore writes, "The contrast between equilibrium and conflict models of society, which was started by Dahrendorf in 1958, has now become a commonplace; and Marx's theories are regularly invoked in opposition to those of Durkheim, Pareto and Malinowski, the principle architects of the functionalist theory".³⁰ Simmel and Max Weber worked on the 'conflict' theory of Marx and contributed new insights to the theory of social change. It is a unique illustration of discovering and advancing existing knowledge on the basis of what ones predecessors contributed to the subject in the past.

The theory of Marx, no doubt emphasised upon conflict in historical interpretation of events, but to say that he altogether neglected universal laws and harmony model of society is not accepted by all scholars. As Bottomore puts it, "My own contention is that the general inclination of Marx's work, when it is traced from his earlier to his later writings, is clearly away from the philosophy of history and towards scientific theory of society, in the precise sense of a body of general laws and detailed empirical statements".³¹ Although the doctrinaire Marx was attracted towards developing scientific theory of society based on empirical investigations, the Marxist scholars have confined their research to historical investigations. It is natural, therefore, that the concept of alienation and its theoretical relevance to social systems have not been fully understood. Our concern here is to go into depth and explore how the awareness or knowledge of alienation phenomenon originated and what are the essential ingredients of the same, and also as to why is it that it continues to dominate values, attitude and behaviour of the people in different societies. Every phenomenon in the universe, including socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-political and socio-psychological life of man, is each a kind of emanation of social reality made up of input and output of social action energy in one form or the other.

This social action energy can be identified in the form of religious, scientific, technological and bureaucratic experiences and knowledge through which organisational and productive forces are tamed and manifested. Socio-cultural energy grows from the depth of belief-systems of philosophical or religious nature of man. The rational approach to these elements may lead to contradictory reforms in relation to orthodox cultic movements in a society. The socio-economic relationships are based on outcome of human labour and economic institutions which form a foundation or substructure of survival for individual and groups in society. The socio-political aspects generate social action energy through voluntary efforts of unions, federations, confederations, etc., of the people who often compete for supremacy with national bureaucracy and government. The socio-psychological factors generate social action energy which may create both conflicting and equilibrium situations so that the social system is allowed to work even when political organisation fail to harmonise goals and achievements of diverse interest groups.

This means that every kind of social reality is impregnated with conflicting or opposing trends of actions which lead to a number of situations of differentiation between opposite manifestations of the same ultimate reality called social universe. Such manifestations are to be found both in animate and inanimate spheres of life. The

individuals, small groups, organisations, institutions and even short-lived lesser aggregates of human beings, experience the process of input and output of diverse kinds of social action energy which keep them going.

The process of social action energy transference in a society takes place in the form of innumerable variety of social interactions which occur distinctively or jointly in accordance with the circumstances under which the process of social action energy transference happens. In its seminal sense, this is the phenomenon of differentiation in the form of either the content or essence of social life in a variety of networks and systems of relationships.

Broadly speaking, these socio-cultural changes, confirm the pattern of input-output model of social action energy transference in relation to individual, small groups and organisations or institutions. These changes may be internal or external to social system and may relate to past, present or future of human existence. Marx dealt with one of the dominant sub-cultures of man in the form of economic interdependence at a fairly advanced stage of scientific and technological development of man's material culture. His concept of alienation was, therefore, related mainly to advanced economic relationships based on human labour and its varied manifestations. As mentioned earlier, Marx propounded three forms of alienation, viz., (i) alienation of labour from its product, (ii) alienation of labour from the act of production; and (iii) alienation of man from nature or his species-being.

These three forms of alienation not only imply economic relationships but through it, the concept encompasses multiple alienations in other spheres of life, viz.; social, cultural, philosophical, religious, political, and psychological. The impact of economic relationships spreads over other aspects of life in the context of varied frames of reference because life is, by and large, symbiotic and integrational.

The primary form of alienation is related to man's internal self and essence that is the product of his labour. The secondary and tertiary forms of alienation are to be found in various dimensions of social relationships, as ever changing elements in external aspects of life between man to man, group to group, organisation to organisation and other dichotomous or trichotomous modes of values, attitude and behaviour.

It is needless to emphasise that at the root of one kind of alienation, there is a specific kind of differentiation in social relationships. And, there can be as many types of alienations as there are areas of differentiation in diverse actions in socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-political and socio-psychological life

of man. In all these composite fields of social relationships, the theory of input-output social action energy model works, and, thus, varying degrees of differentiation become meaningful in the process of change in diverse fields of life. In short, the input-output social action energy model becomes coterminous with the processes of change and differentiation. There would not have been any degree of differentiation in the internal or external form of human relationships had there been the absence of process of change involving input and output of social action energy which happens to be the primordial essence of all life on earth.

Insofar as the concept of alienation of Marx was mainly concerned with economic wellbeing of man, it was by all means value-loaded. Obviously, it could not have gone further, and actually did not go beyond its narrow frame of reference. In the input-output model of social action energy in social relationships, the stage of alienation comes not before but after the onset of differentiation between conflicting or opposing social entities or elements. This is followed by a stage of alienation which represents the outcome of conflict or contradiction between the social opposites, generated by input-output process of social action energy transference involving functional imperatives in social relationships.

According to Bottomore, society is made up of associated opposites, viz., harmony and disharmony, association and competition, favourable and unfavourable tendencies, etc., which may lead to conflict. Moreover, as Dahrendorf asserts, conflict is an inevitable element in all coordinated social relationships. The coordinated relationships between two partners may be disjointed as and when diverse elements are added to them in course of time. "If then it can be shown that imperatively coordinated associations are universally necessary features of human society, it follows that conflict is also universally necessary. This theoretical model, which does not, of course, encompass intersocietal conflict, resembles the biological theory of aggression in accounting for the occurrence of internal conflict, in general, while not explaining the periodicity, scale, or intensity of conflict".³² Beyond conflict and alienation, we have the theory of differentiation and beyond the latter, there is the theory of social action energy change or transference. This interrelated and reversible phenomena mould social relationships in society not only at a point of time but eternally.

It is evident that human labour referred to by Marx is a kind of productive energy. It is the flow of human energy of its kind that creates productive forces in society. Human labour is, thus, the result of the act of social action energy transference and is differentiated from man during the act of labour. Differentiation of this

kind which leads to discontinuities in human relationships is nothing but alienation between man and labour, and labour and its essence or outcome, which is the object or the end product of action. In other words, alienation is equivalent to discontinuities or discontinuous relationships which occur because of differentiation due to the inevitable process of input-output of diverse forms of human energy in social relationships involving both mental and physical activities of man.³³

The very process of production of objects of human labour is an act of differentiation and alienation. It may be difficult to accept the belief that man's differentiation from other species is equal to alienation, because the differences between the two is of kind. Qualitatively, human beings and their species may merge with one another as "species beings", but that is besides the point. So far as the alienation of man and the product of his labour is concerned, its origin lies in differentiation between various kinds of human elements due to input and output of social action energy in the relationships between the working man and the thinking man. It may not be the same case if man is compared with other species. This is because man is differentiated from other species who in terms of class are different in kind though not perhaps in quality. In this context, man is not alienated from man in the sense in which man is alienated from labour due to the flow of human energy towards objectification of his labour. There is a need of evolving a cross-cultural theory of alienation to meet practical as well as ideological problems encountered by man.³⁴

Putting the findings in a nut-shell, it may be noted that alienation is a value loaded concept. The concept of differentiation, the main spring-board of alienation, is on the other hand free from values. It is true, however, that the quality and nature of differentiation phenomenon vary at micro, meso and macro levels in a social system. Alienation may be a painful process and, therefore, may be looked upon as an evil, but it is a necessary facility like childbirth wherein the mother is alienated from her child, as the creator is alienated from his creation and a labourer from the product of his labour. Man is destined to alienation process because he can not avoid the universal law of differentiation generated by input-output nature of eternal social action energy transmission and transference. In other words, input-output process of human actions in cultural, social, economic, political, scientific and technological spheres of life, and the differentiation-discontinuity phenomenon leading to alienation in social relationships are eternal conditions of man in society.

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18. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
20. Denial Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 173, "The concept of structural differentiation as derived from Durkheim and Max Weber, and elaborated by Talcott Parsons and his students, is probably the key sociological concept today in the analysis of coercive social change. It points to the phenomenon that as institutions grow in size and in functions that they have to perform, specialized and distinct subsystems are created to deal with these functions. With the growth of specialized subsystems one finds as well, distinct problems of coordination, hierarchy and social control".
21. "Stratification : Social", *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. 15, USA, The Free Press, 1964, p. 300. See also Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, (Eds. & Trans.), *Max Weber : Essays in Sociology*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1946, pp. 180-95.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 301. Reference is invited to Peter F. Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity*, London, Heimmann, 1969, p. 94. "The world has become divided into nations that know how to manage technology to create wealth and nations who do not know how to do this. Within the rich nations technology has succeeded to an

amazing extent in overcoming the cleavage between the rich and the poor, not by making the rich poorer, but by making the poor richer. It has thereby overcome to a very large extent that haunting spectre of the nineteenth century class war within the industrial society. But this has been replaced by a gap in income and opportunities between nations and cultures which never existed before".

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33. H.R. Trivedi, 'Communications', Seminar, No. 263, 1981, pp. 47-48: "... the whole human race is a helpless Victim of allround differentiation in knowledge and social roles and relationships. The differentiation leads to discontinuities in values, attitudes and behaviour. They multiply ad infinitum and make a mess of everything we try to tackle Multiple forces of reorganisation are no doubt at work, but with little effect, and the dilemma stands..."
34. **A Special Note**
I am grateful to David Schweitzer, President of Research committee on Alienation Theory and Research of ISA for sending me an off-print of his paper entitled, "Alienation Theory and Research : Trends, Issues and Priorities", *International Social Science Journal*, 33: 3, 1981.

In the absence of recently published material on the subject at my disposal, Schweitzer's insightful and valuable paper and the copy of *Newsletter*, 3:1, 1985 of the Alienation Research Committee have been of immense help to me in understanding scope and future of this area or sociocultural concern all over the world. It is in the light of the above material that I offer some observations in this special note.

Apart from the philosophical conclusion at the end of this paper, I have tried to link alienation concept in the secular sense with the process of differentiation and discontinuity in different areas of sociocultural life of man. The main thrust of my argument is on input-output model of social action energy generated on account of values, attitude and behaviour of the people. In this context, de-alienation of individuals and groups can be achieved by psychological conditioning of the mind such that the process of differentiation-discontinuity is looked

upon as a normal occurrence of events in human relationships. It seems possible that social stress and strain due to alienation can be contained and overcome provided a person or a group of people accepts, either alienation or stabilization-which may take place in socio-cultural relationships, as a phenomenon of limited existence and periodicity. It seems that we are destined to be affected by either of the above phenomenon in human relationships. However, none of them can go on perpetually because counter forces of harmony and equilibrium against the differentiation-discontinuity process tend to crop up from time to time. Equilibrium and conflict are two sides of the same coin. In order to control conflict, elements of differentiation can be subdued or eliminated from either side conflict in order to enhance equality between the opposing sides. This calls for self-imposed discipline by differentiated opposing groups and nations on the brink of war. This is a negative incentive for attaining equilibrium and harmony. The positive incentive can be to meet deficiencies and imbalances on either side by new social action inputs in required doses that can reduce differentiation.

It is advisable to add here a caveat and say that if and where differentiation between two social entities exist at a point of time, the situation may not end up in discontinuous relationships. This is because in such a case there is no precedence of equality or equity between two entities. Therefore, the input-output process of social action energy involved in such relationships is likely to lead to harmony, interdependences and amalgamation.

The methods for making empirical studies of the process and impact of alienation in socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-psychological and numerous other areas of life may not be difficult to evolve. This can be achieved if a researcher accepts and uses the differentiation-discontinuity syndrome and input-output model as the media for classification, analysis and interpretation of events for determining quality and degree of alienation in human relationships. It seems possible to achieve the Marxist critical analysis of alienation process as an objective condition by employing the above strategy of study and survey research method. This strategy being applicable to both objective and subjective dimensions of alienation, shall serve as a theoretical framework of long lasting significance for classifying, analysing and interpreting human relationships in social systems irrespective of limitations of time and space. The tall claim made in this paper must be put to test in empirical situation with the application of relevant set of variables.

The so called counterpart of alienation, namely, 'anomie' and its synonyms are distinguishable as separate kinds of socio-psychological phenomenon in the light of the new theory and method suggested here. In essence, this strategy provides a startingpoint for investigating socio-cultural change at macro, meso and micro levels of social systems all over the world. The problems of terminological meaning and conceptual clarify can be sorted out under this strategy and approach.

The differentiation-discontinuity syndrome is the negative counterpart of equilibrium-continuity syndrome. It can maintain

the right full place of Marx's alienation concept in its proper domain of historical materialism, and class analysis. And, at the same time, the input-output social action energy model propounded in this paper, can provide new theoretical directions for further work which may help bridge up the chasm between the classical notion of alienation and contemporary empirical applications. (Schweitzer, *Loc. cit.* p. 527). With the use of this new analytical framework, socio-cultural approach to alienation is neither ignored nor underplayed. Besides, the framework has the capacity to encompass the dual approaches of subjective-objective denotation and positive-negative connotation of the alienation concept.

The subjective or psychological dissatisfaction, and objective or societal one, as different forms of alienation, are the forms of discord arising out of input-output process of social action energy transformation, transmission and transference. Understanding alienation in this perspective amounts to rendering the concept value neutral, and at the same time transforming it into a scientific analytical tool beyond ambiguities from which it has been plagued all along the historical struggle of man (p. 545).

The exercise of preparing inventory of all manifestations and propositions concerning alienation can be done for scientific purpose to understand its vertical or horizontal span in a social system. Such an exercise may not be helpful in deducing a theoretical framework of investigation, more than what differentiation-discontinuity syndrome based on input-output model of social action energy in human relationships, can do. The comparative cross-cultural studies of alienation can also be achieved with advantage with the help of the strategy suggested in this paper. In any case, I agree with Schweitzer that "the main objectives of comparative inquiry are to specify or delimit those aspects of a given theory or proposition about alienation that hold for all societies, those that are systematically relevant only to certain types of societies, and those that are unique and valid only for single societies. The aim, in effect, is to universalize theory and continually reassess its propositions in comparative perspective" (p. 551).

Administrative Discretion and Judicial Review : Concept and Ideologies

T.N. PANDEY

MODERN CLASSIFICATION of functions of government are, broadly, grouped under three heads, viz.: (i) legislative, (ii) executive/administrative, and (iii) judicial. The doctrine of "The separation of powers" as usually understood is derived from Montesquieu¹ who was greatly concerned with the preservation of political liberty. "Political Liberty" he observed: "is to be found only when there is no abuse of power. But constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is liable to abuse it and to carry his authority as far as it will go....To prevent this abuse, it is necessary from the nature of things that one power should be a check on another....When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person or body...there can be no liberty. Again there is no liberty, if the judicial power is not separated from the legislative and the executive.... There would be an end of everything, if the same person or body, whether of the nobles or of the people were to exercise all three powers."²

A complete separation of powers in the sense of the three functions of a government in three independent sets of organs with no overlapping or coordination is not possible in actual practice. Administrative or executive authorities many a time are required to make subordinate legislation, i.e., rules, regulations, notifications, orders and the like in exercise of powers conferred by statutes. There are many administrative authorities that are empowered by statutes to exercise quasi-judicial powers, that is to say, to determine the rights/obligations of parties without being courts, like the Income-tax officers. Inasmuch as such quasi-judicial authorities are occasionally required by relevant statutes to proceed in a judicial (or quasi-judicial) manner, the courts of law can interfere with their decisions by the writs, of prohibition and certiorari, where they act ultra vires the statute by which they were empowered to decide the issues or where they act without jurisdiction, or the principles of natural justice are found to have been

violated, or the discretion vested in them is not properly exercised or they commit apparent errors of law, and in similar such situations. Dicey³ has gone to the extent of saying that it is one of the basic principles of English Constitutional law that all authorities within the state, including the executive, must be under the control of ordinary courts.

The Indian Constitution too has accepted the principle of separation of powers. In *Ram Jawaya vs. Punjab*⁴ the Supreme Court has observed:

The Indian Constitution has not indeed recognised the doctrine of separation of powers in its absolute rigidity but the functions of the different parts or branches of the government have been sufficiently differentiated and consequently it can very well be said that our constitution does not contemplate assumption by one organ or part of the state, function that essentially belong to another.

CONCEPTS

Administrative Law and Constitutional Law

Popularly, administrative law could be described as the law relating to the administration. According to Sir Ivor Jennings⁵, it determines the organisation, powers and the duties of administrative authorities. Critics have found fault with this definition on the ground that it fails to distinguish between administrative law and constitutional law. It also leaves many aspects of administrative law, like control mechanism, untouched.

Constitutional law, according to Holland⁶, describes the various organs of the sovereign power as at rest--administrative law describes them as in motion. According to Maitland⁷, this view of Holland cannot be accepted, if it implies that constitutional law deals with structure while administrative law deals with functions of the various organs of the government because on this hypothesis, the powers and functions of the crown would be relegated to the sphere of administrative law which would not be an acceptable proposition.

According to A.B. Keith⁸, constitutional and administrative laws can not be divorced from each other. According to him, "It is logically impossible to distinguish administrative from constitutional law and all attempts to do so are artificial".

In summing up, it could perhaps be said that the distinction between constitutional law and administrative law is basically one of degree and convenience and not of principle. It also needs to be appreciated that the administrative law is not any specific codified law like the Contract Act or Sale of Goods Act or Income-tax Act. It

is wide enough to include, besides statute law's, administrative rule-making process, precedents, customs, administrative decisions, etc.

Massey has summed up the concept of administrative law in the following words:

... administrative law is that branch of public law which deals with the organization and powers of administrative and quasi-administrative agencies and prescribes principles and rules by which an official action is reached and reviewed in relation to individual liberty and freedom.⁹

Administrative Discretion

It has, however, not been possible by law or administrative instructions to provide, in the complex art of modern government, for all possible situations likely to be encountered in the day-to-day administrative exercises. Hence, exercise of discretion has become a part of the administrative functioning. To ensure that discretion is being properly exercised, judicial review is necessary. Supervisory power of the courts has been the dominant feature of the Anglo-Saxon legal system. Briefly, it could be described as overseeing the acts of the administration with a view to ensuring their legality. The Constitution of India provides for judicial review of administrative actions vide articles 32, 136, 226 and 227.

An administrative authority could be said to be vested with a discretion where the legislature empowers the authority to choose between two alternative courses of action without any objective standard, e.g., whether to act or not to act or when and how to act. If only one course can lawfully be adopted, the decision reached would not be the result of discretion, but the performance of a duty. Situations for the exercise of discretion can arise where the end may be specified but choice may exist as to how the end should be reached.

An authority may, thus, have a discretion whether to exercise a power and a discretion in the manner of exercising it. But there is no finality or absoluteness about these. In the case of *Sharp vs. Wakefield*¹⁰, Lord Halsbury has mentioned about limitations that are inherent in the exercise of discretion in the following words:

... 'discretion' means when it is said that something is to be done with the discretion of authorities that something is to be done according to the rules of reason and justice and not according to private opinion: *Rooke's case*; according to law and not humour. It is to be not arbitrary, vague and fanciful, but legal and regular. And it must be exercised within the limit which an

honest man competent to the discharge of his office ought to confine himself.

Likewise, Lord Wrenbury, in *Roberts vs. Hopwood*,¹¹ has laid down the following law in regard to exercise of discretion:

A person in whom is vested a discretion must exercise his discretion upon reasonable grounds. A discretion does not empower a man to do what he likes merely because he is minded to do so—he must, in the exercise of his discretion do not what he likes, but what he ought. In other words, he must by the use of his reason ascertain the course which reason directs. He must act reasonably.

It is not possible to prescribe any special phraseology for conferring discretionary powers on administrative officers/tribunals. Ordinarily, the words 'may', 'it shall be lawful', 'adequate', 'advisable', 'appropriate', 'beneficial', 'expedient', 'sufficient', 'equitable', are used. These are not words of compulsion. They are enabling words and they only confer capacity, power or authority and imply a discretion.¹² The use of the words 'shall have power' also, connotes the same idea.

Lord Halsbury seems to have deviated a little from his earlier statement (supra) when in a subsequent decision he made the following observation: "where the legislature has confided the power to a particular body with a discretion how it is to be used, it is beyond the power of any court to contest the discretion."¹³

The above-mentioned statement, however, can not be construed to imply that there are no fetters—legal and administrative—in the matter of exercise of discretion. The courts have jurisdiction to determine, in an action properly brought before them, whether the purported exercise of power is authorised by law. If not the order could be struck down.

Discretionary powers are frequently coupled with duties. When a capacity or power is given to a public authority, there may be circumstances which couple with power a duty to exercise it or the manner in which it may only be exercised. In other words, legal and factual contexts, in which the power is to be exercised, may require combining the power with an obligation to exercise it even though it is conferred by the use of the word 'may'.

Earl Cairns L.C. in *Julius vs. Bishop of Oxford* has observed: "Where a power is deposited with a public officer for the purpose of being used for the benefit of persons who are specifically pointed out and with regard to whom a definition is supplied by the legislature of the conditions upon which they are entitled to call for its

exercise, that power ought to be exercised and the Court would require it to be exercised."¹⁴

These observations are relevant in the context of the interpretation of the word 'may' indicating that the word may have to be construed as imposing a duty to act and even duty to act in a particular manner.

Challenge of Administrative Discretion

The exercise of discretion could be impugned directly or indirectly. Parliament may, by express and appropriate words, provide that the exercise of discretion shall be subject to judicial review by providing, restricted or unrestricted, right of appeal. For example, under Sub-section (2) of Section 131, an Income-tax authority has been given discretionary power to impose a fine not exceeding Rs.500 on a person--to whom summons are issued either to give evidence or produce books of accounts or other documents at a certain place and time--if he intentionally omits to make compliance. If the discretion to impose fine is exercised by the concerned Income-tax authority, the person concerned can file an appeal under Section 246(1)(b) and challenge his order.

Parliament can also specify exhaustively the ways in which a discretion may be exercised as by enumerating the types of conditions which an authority may, if it thinks fit, attach to the grant of the permission or licence and the order would become ultra vires if condition other than those prescribed is attached. These are some examples when a discretionary order can be impugned directly.

However, indirect method of challenge is more common. A person who is aggrieved by the exercise of a discretionary power, may instead of attacking it on merits, contend that the person exercising the discretion has acted without jurisdiction or ultra vires, or that rules of natural justice have been contravened in taking decision or that the order is unreasonable, bad, time barred or there had been breach of procedural requirements.

JUDICIAL REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

The question then arises is under what circumstances and to what extent will the court review cases of exercise of administrative/statutory discretion which are neither the subject matter of appeal nor limited by the express provisions of the Act. The general consensus in judicial decisions is that courts should not substitute their own discretion for that of an authority in which the discretion had been conferred. In Tamil Nadu Educational Department, Ministerial and General Subordinate Services Association vs. State of

Tamil Nadu¹⁵ the Supreme Court found no ground to interfere in the administrative functioning in the absence of arbitrariness or mala fides. The Court observed: "All life including administrative life involves experiment, art and error, but within the leading strings of fundamental rights and absent unconstitutional excesses, judicial correction is not right.... The Court cannot substitute its wisdom for government's save to see that unreasonable perversity, malafide manipulation, indefensible arbitrariness and infirmities do not defile the equation for integration."

Grounds of Review

Over the years, courts have laid down policy guidelines which have to be adhered to in the exercise of administrative discretion. An important element which is essential to the lawful exercise of power is that it should be exercised by the authority on whom it had been conferred and by no one else. It is a well established principle of law that when a power has been confided to a person in circumstances indicating that trust is being placed in his individual judgement and discretion he must exercise that power personally unless there is expressed power for delegation. Lord Wright has gone even to the extent of saying: "It would be most improper on general principle of law that extraneous persons, who may or may not have independent interests of their, own should be present at the formulation of the judicial decision."¹⁶

"Delegatus non potest delegate" is an important maxim in the context of sub-delegation. It means that a delegate who has received his authority from the principal is incompetent to sub-delegate his authority to some other body or person. From this, it follows that unless sub-delegation is authorised by the status itself, sub-delegation would be bad and any act done by the sub-delegate would be void.

It is also essential that an authority entrusted with discretion must not, in the purported exercise of its discretion, act under the dictation from another body or person. A duty not to comply with executive instructions to decide individual cases in a particular way is cast upon courts *stricto sensu*. However, this rule can not be carried to the length of preventing one government department from consulting another or of preventing government agencies from acting in accordance with the government policy. There would always be a difference between seeking advice and then genuinely exercising one's discretion on the one hand and acting obediently or automatically under someone else's advice or direction.

Some acts contain express provision to this effect. For example, proviso to Section 119(1) of the Income-tax Act provides that no orders, instructions or directions issued by the Central Board of

Direct Taxes, the apex body in tax administration, shall be issued;

- (a) so as to require any Income-tax authority to make a particular assessment or to dispose of a particular case in a particular manner; or
- (b) so as to interfere with the discretion of the Appellate Assistant Commissioner or Commissioner (Appeals) in the exercise of their appellate functions.

An authority which has been conferred discretion, can not, by adopting a fixed rule of policy, disable itself from exercising its discretion in individual cases. Thus, an authority which has authority to impose fines and penalties would be failing in its exercise of discretion if it fixes specific amounts to be imposed indiscriminately to all cases before it. Again, a factor that may properly be taken into account in exercising a discretion may become an unlawful fetter upon discretion, if it is elevated to the status of a general rule that results in the pursuit of consistency at the expense of the merits of the individual cases. Likewise, a public authority can not effectively bind itself not to exercise a discretion if to do so would disable itself from fulfilling the primary purposes for which it is created. It has been said that "if a person or public body is entrusted by the Legislature with certain powers and duties expressly or impliedly for public purposes, those bodies or persons cannot divest themselves of those powers and duties....."¹⁷ Hence such situations need to be avoided in administrative decision-making.

A discretionary prerogative power is to be exercised for the public good and the court is entitled to see that the power was used properly not improperly or mistakenly. Its exercise should not be hit by the ultra vires rule. The court is entitled to examine the nature, objects and scheme of the legislation and in the light of that examination, would consider as to what is the exact area over which powers are given by the act or rule under which the competent authority purports to act. Where the enabling act requires a power to be exercised in a certain form, the neglect of that form would render the exercise of that power ultra vires. Similarly, where any particular procedure is prescribed for the exercise of power, the exercise would become void if that procedure is not followed. Likewise, the exercise of power may become invalid, if facts on the basis of which exercise of the power must be based are not present (jurisdictional deficiency). All such situations get covered under the 'ultra vires' rule.

A statutory act done in the exercise of statutory powers becomes a

nullity, if it is ultra vires. Likewise, when an act of lower authority is ultra vires, the order of the superior or Appellate Tribunal or authority, who confirms it, becomes equally ultra vires. A very common criticism relating to discretionary orders is that the authority exercising the discretion has not applied its mind. To come out of such situation, it is necessary that the authority should be careful and take a decision only after taking into account all relevant aspects. The authority cannot mechanically sign any order. The record must indicate that mind has been applied though sufficiency of grounds is not justiciable.

A decision would be unsustainable if there is no material with the decision-making authority to support the conclusion reached in the exercise of discretion.

Closely connected with the above mentioned criticism is the ground that the discretionary authority has ignored relevant considerations and the order has been passed taking into account irrelevant considerations which are extraneous to the issues under consideration. An important decision of the Supreme Court on this subject is in the case of Barium Chemicals Ltd. vs. Company Law Board¹⁸. Under Section 237 of the Companies Act, 1956, the Company Law Board ordered an investigation into the affairs of Barium Chemicals Ltd. This section empowers the Company Law Board to order investigation, if, in its opinion, the business of the company is being conducted with intent to defraud its creditors or members, etc., or the management of the company is guilty of fraud, misfeasance or other misconduct or the members of the company have not given full information about the affairs of the company. The basis of the exercise of discretion for ordering investigation was that due to faulty planning, the company incurred a loss as a result of which the value of the shares had fallen and many eminent persons had resigned from the Board of Directors. The court quashed the order of the Board on the ground that the basis of the exercise of discretion is extraneous to the facts given in Section 237 for such exercise of discretion. Similar was the decision in the case of Rohtas Industries vs. S.D. Aggarwal¹⁹. In this case also, an investigation was ordered under Section 237 of the Companies Act on the ground that: (i) there were complaints of misconduct against one of the leading directors of the company in relation to other companies subject to his control for which he was being prosecuted, and (ii) the company had arranged to sell the preference shares of the face value of Rs.3 lakh of another company held by it for inadequate consideration. The Supreme Court held that the first reason was irrelevant and the second was without evidence. Therefore, the order of the Company Law Board was struck down.

Discretionary orders have also been struck down on the ground of

mala fide exercise of power. Where actual purpose is different from that which is authorised by law and the discretionary power is used ostensibly for the act which is authorised but in essence for the unauthorised purpose, the authority could be said to be acting in a mala fide manner. Such orders amount to abuse of power. An important decision in this context is that of *Pratap Singh vs. Punjab*²⁰. The appellant was employed as a Civil Surgeon in the State of Punjab when he proceeded on leave preparatory to retirement. His leave was at first granted, but after about six months of the grant of leave, it was cancelled and the civil surgeon was put under suspension. An enquiry was instituted against him on the charge of receiving a sum of Rs. 16 from a patient in an illegal manner when he was working as civil surgeon. The Supreme Court decided that the actions were mala fide and the decision has been taken to wreak vengeance of the chief minister and, therefore, it was mala fide exercise of power.

In *M.P. Industries Ltd. vs. ITO*²¹, the Supreme Court found that two conditions were necessary for initiating action for reassessment and these were that the ITO must have reason to believe that the income had been under-assessed and that such under-assessment was due to non-disclosure of material facts by the assessee. Since the ITO could not file any affidavit setting out the circumstances under which he formed the necessary belief, it was concluded that he had no reason to believe that there was under-assessment and, therefore, his action was mala fide.

Some more grounds could be mentioned which have been held against the administrative authorities for not taking proper care to exercise administrative discretion. It would be no use enlarging this list. However, before closing this discussion, it is to be mentioned that when the power is discretionary, it must be exercised reasonably, which means that there should be no element of arbitrariness in the decision taken by the concerned authority. A decision could be said to be arbitrary when it is based on mere whim or caprice or purely subjective likes and dislikes or on irrational beliefs. No statute authorises a person to act arbitrarily. Arbitrariness shows lack of objectivity. Therefore, the administrative decision must follow the path of reasonableness.

Discretion has to be exercised within the jurisdictional limits of the decision maker. It is a known principle that an administrative act outside jurisdiction is void in law. The courts will quash, or declare such orders to be unlawful or prohibit any action to enforce it. It would be a nullity, being destitute of the statutory authority, without which it is nothing.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Administrative discretion is often challenged on the ground that it violates one or more of the fundamental rights guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution of India. Generally, the challenge is made with reference to Articles 14 and 19 which deal with subjects relating to equality before the law/equal protection of law (Art. 14) and various freedoms such as: (i) freedom of speech and expression; (ii) freedom to assemble peacefully and without arms; (iii) freedom to form associations or unions; (iv) freedom to move freely throughout the territory of India; (v) freedom to reside and settle in any part of India; and (vi) freedom to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business (Art.19). Courts exercise control over delegation of discretionary powers to the administration by adjudicating upon the constitutionality of the law under which such powers are delegated as also at the stage of exercise of delegation.

Some of the guidelines culled out from various judicial decisions are:

1. The absence of arbitrary power is an important element of rule of law. Discretion when conferred upon executive authorities must be confined within clearly defined limits;²²
2. Discretionary power by itself is not violative if it is controlled and guided;²³
3. The discretion vested has to be looked into from two points of view, viz., (a) does it admit of the possibility of any real and substantial discrimination, and (b) does it impinge on a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution. Article 14 can be invoked only when both of these conditions are satisfied;²⁴
4. The bare possibility that the powers may be misused or abused can not, per se, induce the court to deny the existence of the power;²⁵
5. Discretionary power to be reasonable must not to be unguided or uncontrolled;²⁶
6. Mere absence of judicial review does not make discretionary power unreasonable.²⁷

There is a plethora of case law on the subject of exercise of discretion on matters affecting fundamental rights. It is neither possible nor necessary to refer to all such cases. The basic aspects to be taken care of in such matters are that the exercise of discretion should not be arbitrary, should indicate that the authority exercising the powers has applied its mind, it has formed its view on

adequate relevant material, the exercise of power is not mala fide, and there is no abuse of the power conferred. These aspects have been covered in detail in earlier discussion.

Whereas statute confers discretionary power without imposing an obligation to state reasons, the statutory authority need not give any reasons for his decision.²⁸ However, if the discretion is to be exercised in the discharge of judicial or quasi-judicial functions, reasons must be given to make the order valid.²⁹

RELIEFS AND REMEDIES AGAINST ADMINISTRATION

The Constitution of India contains various provisions to bring administrative authorities/tribunals under the control and supervision of superior courts. The remedies by way of writs are speedy and inexpensive remedies available to all the aggrieved persons against the administration. Article 32 guarantees the right to move the highest judicial forum--Supreme Court--for the enforcement of the fundamental rights which are guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution. The Supreme Court is empowered to issue writs in the nature of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, certiorari and quo-warranto for protecting the fundamental rights. Similar power has been conferred on the High Court by Article 226. The powers of the high courts are much wider. The high courts can issue such writs not only for the enforcement of fundamental rights but also for "any other purpose". Thus, high courts can issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights as also for the enforcement of common law rights.³⁰

Article 227 gives powers to the high court to exercise administrative and judicial supervision over all the courts and tribunals in the country--excluding tribunals for armed forces. Article 136 empowers the Supreme Court to grant special leave of appeal from any judgement, decree, determination, sentence or order passed by any court or tribunal in India.

Besides the above mentioned remedies under the Constitution, remedies are also available under the ordinary law. These remedies are:

1. A request for declaratory action, i.e., seeking a declaration from the court about the legal rights of the petitioner. Such orders could be secured under Section 34 of the specific Relief Act read with Section 9 of the Code of Civil Procedure.
2. Injunctions: The persons affected can apply for injunctions. Injunction is a specific order/command of the court preventing a party from doing that which he is under a legal obligation not to do or directing the performance of a particular act or thing. It could be either prohibitory or mandatory. The

former forbids the doing of wrongful act which would request in the infringement of some legal or equitable rights of the plaintiff. The latter forbids the defendant to do or permit continuance of a wrongful act.

3. Suits for damages: Actions of administrative authorities can be challenged in an action for damages where the illegality or unlawful act committed can be challenged as civil wrong. However, when a statute prescribes a specific remedy for the non-performance of an act, e.g., fine, penalty, etc., the performance can not be enforced in any other manner. Therefore, in such circumstances, no claim for damages can lie.
4. Review, Revision, Appeals: Besides the above, occasionally there are provisions in different statutes/rules which provide for review, revision or appeals in appropriate forums. Occasionally superior authorities are permitted to take notice of wrong decision/act *suo motu* also.
5. Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code: Under this section inherent jurisdiction of the high court could be invoked for redressal of grievance arising out of wrong exercise of jurisdiction.

The multiplicity of remedies available to challenge administrative decisions is itself a problem in administrative law and occasionally causes hardship if wrong channels are resorted to. In *Hannam vs. Bradford Corpn.*³¹, the plaintiff failed to obtain relief because he had applied for the wrong remedy. Roskill L.J. once observed: "There are a number of shoals and very little safe water in the uncharted seas which divide the time between prerogative order and statutory appeals and I do not propose to plunge into those seas in a case where it is unnecessary to so do."³²

It is not that all orders where discretion is exercised are open to challenge by judicial proceedings. A 'judicial review' of administrative orders could be considered as barred in the following circumstances:

1. The Parliament may itself provide for exclusion of judicial review by means of statutory provisions themselves. For example, Chapter XXC of the Income-Tax Act, 1961, provides for pre-emptive purchase of immovable properties and, vide Section 269 UD, the appropriate authority is authorised to make an order (the word used is 'may') for purchase by the Central Government of such properties at an amount equal to the amount

of apparent purchase consideration within the stipulated time. Section 269 UN of this Chapter bars a judicial review of such an order by providing that such an order shall be final and conclusive and shall not be called in question in any proceeding under the Income-tax Act or under any other law for the time being in force.

2. A discretionary power is not reviewable, unless someone has locus standi to impugn the validity of its exercise. Mere academic challenges are not permissible. A decision by public corporation that it would only recruit post-graduates for its middle level staff may not be open to challenge unless some affected candidate working in the corporation or outside establishes that the qualification fixed is discriminatory. In such an event, he could be said to have sufficient legal interest to challenge the decision.³³
3. In recent years, there has been a progressive trend in our country and in various other countries, like USA and UK. Acts of public authorities are being challenged under the category of "public interest litigation". In 1978, the Rules of the Supreme Court were revised to insert 0.53 relating to judicial review and it was provided that an application for judicial review for any of the reliefs against a public authority, could be brought by any person having -- "sufficient interest in the matter to which the application relates". This substituted expression replacing the word 'aggrieved' by 'interest' entitles any citizen to enforce the law against public authorities in respect of their statutory duties.
4. There have been a number of decisions of English Courts where it has been held that if the authority for the exercise of discretion is derived from the royal prerogative, its review should be limited to question of vires in a limited way. Generally, courts have not allowed bad faith to be attributed to the Crown. But such views are not common now. The decision of the House of Lords in Padfield's case³⁴ marks the emergence of an attitude of intervention even in such cases by the judiciary and has been adopted in a number of subsequent other decisions.
5. In India, there are provisions in the Constitution requiring exercise of discretion, where expressly or by implication judicial review has been barred, viz.:

- (a) The nomination of members to the Legislative Council by a governor or to the council of states by the President.
- (b) The decision of a question as to disqualification of a

member of Parliament by the President and of a member of State Legislature by the governor.

Even though these matters are committed to subjective satisfaction of the executive head, the propriety of these cannot be questioned by the courts.

6. The discretion exercised must raise a 'Justiciable' issue. No judicial review can be claimed in respect of matters which are 'non-justiciable' or 'political'. It has been held that the issue whether a particular function is political or not rests with the court and not the executive.³⁵
7. No judicial relief can be claimed until the administrative body has given a final decision.
8. Non-statutory discretionary matters are not justiciable in a court of law.

Thus, very few discretionary powers could be said to be absolutely unreviewable when they have direct impact on personal rights of liberties.

A 'judicial review', though otherwise permissible, may be refused on the following grounds:

1. **Unreasonable delay or laches:** The court may refuse remedy, if there is unreasonable delay in invoking the court's jurisdiction. There is no fixed period for laches, as is in the cases where limitation is provided. Plea regarding laches is to be judged on the facts and circumstances of each situation and there is no distinction in this regard whether the claims relate to fundamental rights or for other matters.
2. **Alternative remedy:** If the person seeking relief of the court by way of writ petition or otherwise has not availed of other usual and alternative remedies, the court may in the exercise of its discretion refuse review and relief to the petitioner. However, the Supreme Court and the high court can not refuse relief. Under Articles 32 and 226 on the ground of alternative remedy if the relief sought for relates to violation of fundamental rights. However, there is no inflexible rule regarding other matters. If the alternative remedy is not adequate, or has been lost due to no fault of the petitioner, involves delay, or the order passed is in lack of jurisdiction or abuse of jurisdiction, or is illusory, the high court may entertain claim for relief.
3. **Res-judicata:** A judicial review can be refused on the ground of re-judicata. If a petition had been heard and dismissed,

the same petition cannot be filed in the same court again.

4. Courts do not interfere with an administrative body's determination of facts except when its conclusion is perverse or is not supported by any evidence of in the administrative body's order there is "error of law apparent on the face of the record". The Supreme Court has observed that the Tribunal is the judge of the facts and if there is some legal evidenceto support the finding, it would not interfere with the decision. The observations are:

The adequacy or reliability of the evidence is not a matter which can be permitted to be canvassed before the High Court³⁶ (in any writ proceeding).

In the following quotation from de Smith's treatise--**Judicial Review of Administrative Act** (4th edition) at pages 285-86, reproduced by the Supreme Court in its decision in the case of *CIT vs. Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.*³⁷, the principles formulated by the courts on the subject of administrative discretion have been succinctly summed up. The observations are:

The authority in which a discretion is vested can be compelled to exercise that discretion, but not to exercise it in any particular manner. In general a discretion must be exercised only by the authority to which it is committed. That authority must genuinely address itself to the matter before it; it must not act under the dictation of another body or disable itself from exercising a discretion in each individual case. In the purported exercise of its discretion it must not do what it has been forbidden to do, nor must it do what it has not been authorised to do. It must act in good faith, must have regard to all relevant considerations and must not be swayed by irrelevant considerations, must not seek to promote purposes alien to the letter or to the spirit of the legislation that gives it power to act, and must not act arbitrarily or capriciously. Nor where a judgement must be made that certain facts exist can a discretion be validly exercised on the basis of an erroneous assumption about those facts. These several principles can conveniently be grouped in two main categories; failure to exercise a discretion, and excess or abuse of discretionary power. The two classes are not, however, mutually exclusive. Thus, discretion may be improperly fettered because irrelevant considerations have been taken into account; and where an authority hand over its discretion to another body, it acts ultra vires. Nor is it possible to differentiate with precision

the grounds of invalidity contained within each category.

The subject of administrative discretion is vast and cannot be covered in all its aspects covering all relevant ideologies in a short article. Exercise of discretion is an inseparable part of sound administration. Since human machinery is involved in decision-making, courts have well settled the rule in this branch of administrative law that an executive authority must be rigorously held to the standards by which it professes its action to be judged and it must exclusively observe these standards of invalidation of an act in violation of them.³⁸ In a democracy governed by the rule of law, the executive government or any of its officers cannot afford to act arbitrarily and, therefore, occasionally the courts have also observed that before the exercise of discretion, administrative authority must also frame rules for proper exercise of discretion. Courts have gone to the extent of saying that even the powers of the President or the governor to grant pardon and to suspend or commute sentences or power of the chief minister to allot cement, plots, or houses from discretionary quota or to make nominations to medical and engineering colleges must also conform to this norm. However, broad rules and regulations would be unnecessary if the basic values involved in discretionary decision-making are taken care of by those who are entrusted with such power.

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Study of Administration 1887 : Centenary of Woodrow Wilson's Essay

B.M. CHITLANGI

WOODROW WILSON marked a new beginning in thinking on administration. There would probably be considerable agreement among contemporary professional students of public administration that his essay, "The Study of Administration" is the most distinguished essay of such brief compass in the history of public administration. Published early in Wilson's career, in 1887, it proved a remarkably accurate prediction of the shape of things to come.¹

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born in Staunton Va., USA, on December 28, 1856. After graduation from Princeton University, he received a doctorate degree from John Hopkins University on his brilliant thesis entitled "Congress Government" in 1886. He began teaching at Bryn Mawr College in 1886, went to Wesleyan University in 1886 and to Princeton in 1890, as professor of jurisprudence and political economy. As a College professor and university president, Wilson dealt with the subject of government and public administration for twenty-five years before he became the Governor of New Jersey in 1911, President of USA in 1913, and founder of the League of Nations in 1919. Wilson critics regarded him as an inspiring teacher and an effective college administrator, but a poor politician and an inept President.²

Beside 'The Study of Administration', Wilson's published writings are extremely numerous. Among the more important are: Congressional Government: A Study in American Politics (1885); The State: Elements of Historical and Practical Politics (1889); Division and Reunion 1829-1889 (1893); An Old Master and Other Essays (1896); George Washington (1896); A History of American People in 5 Vols. (1902). In these papers, it is to be found the explanation of his great popular influence, his genius for simplification of complex issues; and his mastery of the phrase that makes the idea attractive.³

Wilson's first analysis of the field of administration was presented in his paper "The Study of Administration", though he had no personal experience of administration at that time. His paper is

regarded as a significant trail-blazing effort.⁴ The moral tone of Wilson's article reflected the mental set-up of the reform period of USA, and it has been a continuing undercurrent in the study of public administration. Wilson, an ardent reformer and later a president of Civil Service Reform League, facilitated the expansion of an ethical sense of public duty beyond the conceptual confines of the civil service and into entire intellectual terrain of public administration.⁵ Thus, Wilson was a combination of political reformer and executive leader, scholar and statesman, politician and administrator.⁶

History of Study of the Administration

Wilson started his essay "The Study of Administration" with taking account of what others have done in the study of administration. He compared the century-old concepts and functions of government with modern government. According to him:

There is scarcely a single duty of government which was once simple which is now complex; government once had but a few masters, it now has scores of masters. Majorities formally only underwent government, they now conduct government...the functions of government are every day becoming more and more complex and difficult, they are also vastly multiplying in number.⁷

Looking at the importance of administration, one wrote systematically on the administration as the branch of science of government till the end of 19th century. Political scientists mainly concentrated on constitution, nature of state, sovereignty, popular powers, etc. They were mostly concerned with the problems of democracy and monarchy. The question: who shall make law, what shall that law be, and how law should be administered with enlightenment, equity, speed and without friction, was put aside as a matter of practical detail, which clerks could arrange.

In America, the administrative science was considered by Wilson as foreign science developed by French and German professors. The reasons for growth of administration in European countries were two-fold: first that in Europe the governments were independent of popular assent, and second the desire to keep government a monopoly. Wilson concluded that the popular sovereignty in America had prevented the way of development of science of administration. It is harder for democracy to organise administration than for monarchy.⁸ Americans had enthroned public opinion as governing principle. Wilson asserted the need of development of the science of administration in America by thought, principle and aim, putting aside the concentration

on constitutional principles. Thus, Wilson outlined the history of the study, showed how it was a comparatively new development in political science, very cogently presented the necessity and value of the study and indicated the methods by means of which it ought to be carried on.⁹

Politics-Administration Dichotomy

It was Woodrow Wilson who made one of the first dogmatic distinction between politics and administration. Prior to examining the relationship between administration and politics, Wilson defined public administration as follows:

Public administration is detailed and systematic execution of public law. Every particular application of general law is an act of administration. The assessment and raising taxes, for instance, the hanging of a criminal, the transportation and delivery of mails, the equipment and recruiting of the army and navy, etc., are all obviously acts of administration; but the general laws which direct these things to be done are as obviously outside of and above administration. The broad plans of governmental action are not administrative, the detailed execution of such plans is administration.¹⁰

Thus, Wilson states that first object of administrative study is to discover what government can properly and successfully do. This is a description of central concern of politics, but his paper is devoted largely to arguing separability of politics and administration. Although Wilson drew a line of demarcation between politics and administration yet he was dubious about stretching this line across the dizzy heights and dense jungles of practical government.¹¹ Wilson supported the thesis of separability of politics and administration by saying that 'administrative questions are not political questions' or 'politics is the special province of the statesman, administration of the technical officers' or 'administration' lies outside the proper sphere of politics.¹² But at the same time, he accepts the interdependence and close relationship between politics and administration. Wilson puts that no line of demarcation, setting apart administrative from non-administrative functions, can be run between this and that development of government without being run down the hill over dizzy heights of distinction and through dense jungles of statutory enactment, hither and thither around 'ifs' and 'buts' 'whens' and 'however's' until they become altogether lost to the common eye.¹³

Thus, Wilson's views on relationship between politics and administration are inconsistent but the probable answer of Wilson

would be that the politics, from which administration should be free, are the activities of political parties, not the process of public policy formulation.¹⁴

Relationship between Public Opinion and Administration

Wilson examined the problem, as to what part shall public opinion take in the conduct of administration, and his answer was that the role of public opinion should be that of authoritative critic. Therefore, the need is to make public opinion efficient without any other suffering. According to Wilson, directly exercised, in the oversight of the daily details and in the choice of the daily means of government, public criticism is of course a clumsy nuisance, a rustic handling delicate machinery. But as superintending the greater force of formative policy alike in politics and administration, public criticism is altogether safe and beneficent, altogether indispensable. Let administrative study find the best means for giving public criticism this control and for shutting it out from all other interference.¹⁵

Indispensability of Civil Service

For improvement of public opinion, the better civil servants are highly required. Therefore, Wilson felt the need of technically trained civil service. The civil servants are apparatus of government. It will be necessary to organise democracy by sending up the competitive examinations for the civil servants definitely prepared for standing liberal tests as to technically schooled civil service will presently have become indispensable.¹⁶ Wilson believed that civil service were in principle not involved in the policy formulation. He was strongly opposed to the creation of a bureaucratic elite not subject to democratic control.¹⁷ The ideal for us is a civil service cultured and self-sufficient enough to act with a sense and vigour and yet so intimately connected with the popular thought by means of elections and constant public counsel, as to find arbitrariness or class spirit quite out of the question.¹⁸

Study Methods for Administration

Finally Wilson examined the study methods best suitable for administration. Rejecting the philosophical method, he emphasised on the historical and comparative methods. He says that nowhere else, in the whole field of politics, one can use these methods more safely than in the province of administration.¹⁹ Wilson asserted that when we study the administrative system of France and Germany, knowing that we are not in search of political principles, we need not care a peppercorn for the constitutional or political reasons which Frenchmen or Germans give for their practices when explaining them to us. If I see a

murderous fellow sharpening a knife cleverly, I can borrow his way of sharpening the knife without borrowing his probable intention to commit murder with it and so by keeping this distinction in view--that is, by studying administration as a means of putting out own politics into convenient practice, as a means of making is democratically politics towards all administratively possible towards each foreign systems have to teach us. We thus devise an adjusting weight for our comparative method of study²⁰. Without comparative studies in government, we cannot rid ourselves of the misconception that administration stands upon an essentially different basis in a democratic state from that on which it stands in a non-democratic state.

CONCLUSION

The essay "The Study of Administration", was considered a new beginning in the thinking on administration. Though Wilson did not regard his essay too highly, yet Wilson had admitted that he was merely presenting a semi-popular introduction to administrative studies and that it goes critically round the study, considering it from various outside points of view, rather than entering it and handling its proper topics.²¹ As a young and enthusiastic teacher of government, Wilson presented not so much as scientific definition of administration as a challenge to the great evils of the day, spoils in politics and the patronage.²² Wilson failed to amplify what the study of administration actually entails, what the proper relationship should be between the administrative and political realms and whether or not administrative study could ever become an abstract science akin to the natural sciences.²³

Wilson's article has been interpreted by later scholars in a number of different ways. Some have insisted that Wilson was the originator of the politics-administration dichotomy, others have countered that Wilson was well aware that public administration was innately political in nature. The reality of matter appears to be that Wilson himself was ambivalent about what public administration really was.²⁴

Wilson was not alone in advocating a clearcut separation of administration from politics. In 1879, Albert Stickney had argued in his "True Republic" that "Political servants must have duties of only one class. The men in the executive administration should have nothing to do with general legislation, and men who have to do with general legislation should not meddle with the details of administration of any one department."²⁵ Another of Wilson's contemporaries who was greatly concerned about the mixing or 'meddling' of politics with administration was Professor Frank J. Goodnow. Goodnow's definition was similar to Wilson's, although he made technical distinction,

which Wilson had rejected, between politics as execution of the will of the state, and administration as the execution of that will.²⁶

There was little immediate reaction to Goodnow's queries about relating, not merely separating, administration and politics. Wilson's well-phrased, though somewhat ambiguous, demarcation continued to be the accepted formula among many political scientists and most specialists in public administration.²⁷

Nevertheless, Wilson unquestionably posited one unambiguous thesis in his article that has had a lasting impact on the field of public administration was worth studying. His article can certainly be termed as 'seminal'. The article marks the birth of public administration as a self-conscious inquiry or a 'generic course'.²⁸

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Planning for Infrastructure Development : Some Policy Issues

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IT IS universally recognised that infrastructure development plays a critical role in initiating and accelerating the process of economic development and that it is a powerful instrument for realisation of the objective of balanced regional development. Because of its vital role and characteristics, development of infrastructure cannot be left to the mechanism of market forces, particularly in an under-developed country characterized by gross inadequacy of various types of infrastructure facilities. The state has to assume the responsibility of providing these facilities for creating conditions for self sustained economic growth. In fact, economic development planning, in India as well as in other developing countries, is largely oriented to creation and expansion of infrastructure facilities which claim lion's share in the total plan outlays. Thus, infrastructure planning becomes an integral part of the overall development strategy.

ISSUES

In planning for infrastructure development, whether at the national level or state and sub-state level, a number of issues arise. These can be expressed in the form of choices between different alternatives about which the planners have to exercise their judgement taking into account the prevailing conditions at any given time. Some of the major issues which arise in this context have been briefly indicated in the following paras.

Economic Vs Social Infrastructure

Given the overall scarcity of resources, the very first choice arises as to which items to select for investment. Normally, the planners show a preference for economic infrastructure covering the hardcore of power, transport and irrigation. There is normally an

acute scarcity of these facilities and they are regarded as directly linked to development of productive activities. Moreover, these are often associated with eye catching gigantic projects for which planners have a liking and for which international aid is more readily available. Thus, investment in social infrastructure tends to get neglected.

However, there is now a growing realisation that the social services, like health and education, are not merely to be treated as welfare activities but are essentially in the form of investment in human capital. Hence, investment in social infrastructure is also directly related to the aims of increasing productivity and promoting growth. Thus, investment in human capital is as important as investment in material or physical capital. Recognising the complementarity of the two types of infrastructure, it is important that development of social infrastructure is planned with similar priority.

Scale and Technology

Even after deciding about particular items of infrastructure to be selected for investment, a number of policy choices remain open before the planners. The same service can be provided through a variety of technology with different implications for costs, quality and input utilisation. For instance, there are various alternatives for meeting the energy requirements ranging from atomic power, electricity, coal, oil, organic waste and so on. Similarly, in the field of transport, there are choices between rail, road and air transport. Again, irrigation facilities can be provided through large scale projects, medium projects or private minor works.

Within each type of item, several technological options may be available. For instance, diesel, electricity or coal in case of rail transport and thermal Vs. hydel for generation of electricity. The question of technology is closely linked with that of scale at which the service is to be provided. We have already talked of the choice between minor and major projects in case of irrigation facilities. Similarly power can be generated through small bio-gas plants, mini and micro hydel plants and gigantic power houses. The planner has to exercise his judgement after a careful consideration of the various pros and cons of these alternatives.

Proper Sequencing

Proper sequencing of building up infrastructure is also very important. Often this issue is posed as one of building ahead and in response to demand. If investment infrastructure is in response to demand, there may be better utilisation of created facilities.

However, such an approach may not be suitable for a developing economy because private investment is hampered by absence of necessary overhead facilities. Hence, much of the investment in infrastructure in a developing economy is guided by the consideration that it would encourage investment in directly productive activities which will create demand for these facilities. Therefore, planners must make realistic projections of the demand of various types of facilities so that a balance is kept between short-term and long-term requirements for economic development.

Quantitative Expansion Vs Qualitative Improvement

Another choice that the planner faces is between the quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement. The general inadequacy of infrastructure facilities and social pressures from all regions of the country create pressures for a widespread quantitative expansion of facilities. This leads to diffusion of resources and poor quality of the services provided. In our view, in the initial stages, when there is need to create a minimum level of infrastructure in all parts of the country, the emphasis has to remain on a quantitative expansion of infrastructure. But at later stages of development, attention may shift to the question of qualitative improvement.

Rural Vs Urban Bias

There is a marked imbalance between urban and rural areas with regard to infrastructure facilities. There is generally an urban bias in the development of these services because the problem of large urban centres attract greater attention. The result is that the vast rural hinterland is denied even the minimum basic necessary services of drinking water and sanitation not to talk of other infrastructure required for rural development. This abets the process of rural urban migration in a predominantly rural economy like India. There is a need to remove this imbalance between rural and urban areas not only from the point of view of the social needs of the rural people but also for the rapid economic development of the rural areas.

Concentration Vs Dispersal

Another important problem faced by the planners is with regard to the decisions regarding the location of infrastructure facilities. Since there are not enough resources, the demand for all areas cannot be satisfied simultaneously. On the other hand, the demands of large urban centres which also have large industrial concentration generate greater pressure and are successful in getting large funds diverted towards them. From the point of view of the short-term returns also,

the policy of concentration in the location of the infrastructure facilities is likely to be more paying. However, this consideration has to be balanced against the consideration of regional balances and the needs to provide at least a minimum level of social services to the entire population.

Expansion Vs Maintenance

Planners have also to secure a proper balance between the need for expansion and creation of new facilities and that of proper management and efficient running of the existing facilities. Often there is a tendency for emphasis on the former and neglect of the latter. The creation of facilities is also an easier task than maintenance. The result is that full benefits are not derived from the already existing facilities while huge funds are spent on creation of new facilities. As a result of neglect of maintenance, we see the large power houses running at extremely low capacities, unkept field channels of irrigation works, primary schools without the necessary facilities and hospitals without doctors and medicines, and so on.

These aspects must receive adequate attention of the planners and sufficient funds should be made available for proper maintenance of existing facilities. This question is also closely linked with that of the efficient management of the public utilities. Due to the inefficient management of various public utilities in the country, we are witnessing the phenomenon of enormous losses in State Electricity Boards, State Transport Corporations, major irrigation works, etc. Improvement in the efficiency of the running of these services is of no less importance than the creation of new facilities.

Pricing Policies

A major issue that arises in infrastructure planning is that of the proper pricing policies for the provision of public utilities. Because of the need to provide these facilities at low cost to the society, they are often provided at a subsidised price. Another consideration in keeping their prices low is that of the likely consequences on the cost of production in other areas. Against this, there are considerations of meeting the financial requirements and raising surpluses for financing the development plans. Hence these services should be run in a manner that they generate an adequate return on the heavy investment made in them. However, price increases should not be resorted to cover up the inefficiencies in the management of these enterprises. The price policy of social services is also required to serve other requirements as well like that of conserving the use of resources or encouraging one type of technological alternative against another. A suitable price policy has to

be devised keeping all the diverse considerations in mind.

INADEQUACIES

The Indian Plans have emphasized the role of infrastructure in promoting economic development and a substantial portion of plan allocations has gone into the infrastructure sector leading to substantial improvement in infrastructure facilities over the planning period. However, infrastructure planning is marked by excessive ad hocism leading to various inadequacies and deficiencies. The various issues discussed above have not been properly examined and no comprehensive planning for infrastructure development has been adopted. In our opinion, some of the major lacunae in infrastructure planning in India are as follows:

1. There is excessive ad hocism and rule of thumb in the allocation of funds to infrastructure sector as well as its various components. No detailed analysis of the rates of return on various types of infrastructure facilities have been attempted so as to provide a rational basis for allocation of plan funds.
2. There is heavy emphasis on economic infrastructure and the development of social infrastructure has received less attention than it deserved. At the national level, roughly 45 per cent of the total plan outlay has been going to the building up of economic infrastructure as against 12 per cent to the social services sector.
3. Formulation of projects is often not based on adequate and detailed planning and the estimates of costs and benefits are not based on realistic assumptions. Thus, it is often found that the actual cost turns out to be several times more than the original estimates while on the other hand, the returns are not according to the expectations.
4. There is also lack of integration in planning the infrastructure development. Often a service or facility is created without ensuring the necessary linkages as well as other complementary services. Sometimes the infrastructure facility may not get utilized because simultaneous efforts have not been made to promote directly productive activities or productive activities might suffer because infrastructure development is not planned. Further, in case of irrigation facilities, one of the main reasons for under utilization of capacity is the lack or inadequacy of complementary works. Lack of power line for tubewell or field channels for canals

are some of the few cases where planning of complementary infrastructure is not simultaneously being done.

5. The question of various technological options available and their socio-economic implications have also not been given adequate thought. Often there is a preference for large scale and eye catching projects which preempt most of the plan funds.
6. The question of location has also not received full attention which are often governed by political rather than economic and technical considerations. Consequently, there is a marked rural-urban imbalance in the development of infrastructure facilities. At the local level also, there is no scientific approach to the creation of these facilities and political pulls and pressures play a dominant role.
7. The development of infrastructure facilities has also not been in keeping with the objective of balanced regional development. There are considerable inter-state and inter-regional disparities in the infrastructure facilities.
8. The planners have also not fully succeeded in balancing the short-term vs long-term aspects of infrastructure planning. The long-term projections of demand and supply have often proved wrong resulting in severe bottlenecks in critical facilities which then have repercussions on other plan targets.
9. Equally glaring have been the failures at the implementation level due to a number of factors. The implementation of projects is much slower than planned. This results in considerable cost and time over-runs. Consequently, there is plan spill over and a large part of plan funds are preempted on the on-going schemes. According to one estimate, schemes worth Rs.2,45,000 crore have slipped over from Sixth Plan to Seventh Plan whereas the approved outlay of the Seventh Plan on major and medium irrigation programmes is little over Rs.11,500 crore.
One reason for this situation is that there is a tendency to take up a large number of projects simultaneously without adequate provision for funds, manpower and other necessary inputs. The monitoring of project implementation is, moreover, slack and ineffective.
10. The maintenance aspect of the problem has also been neglected. Now facilities are created without adequate provisions for the maintenance of existing facilities. This results in poor quality, frequent breakdowns, under utilization of capacity, higher running costs, etc. It has been estimated that if the

plant load factor (PLF) of existing units of State Electricity Boards could be raised from the present level by only 10 per cent and if the transmission losses were reduced from 21 per cent to 10 per cent the overall availability of thermal power could be increased by more than 35 per cent thus ending all power shortage in the country.

11. The public sector enterprises responsible for provision of different public utilities have displayed gross inefficiency in management. There is often political interference in their working as well as non-professional approach in manning and managing these organizations. There is substantial under utilization of capacities, poor quality and high cost of service non-realisation of dues from public considerable leakages and pilferages with the result that these undertakings have become white elephants running into enormous losses and putting a heavy burden on the economy.
12. In spite of the long period of planning, the planners have not been able to devise an appropriate price policy for public utilities. Prices are either kept low because of political considerations or they are raised to cover the administrative deficiencies without full consideration of their implications for the economy.

SUGGESTIONS

In view of the fact that infrastructure development is a critical element in the process of economic development and that more than half of the plan outlay is being devoted to this sector, it is imperative that the above mentioned inadequacies in infrastructure planning are removed. A few suggestions are given below in this connection.

1. The present haphazard and ad hoc approach to infrastructure development should be replaced by a scientific and comprehensive policy which takes into account the various aspects as highlighted above. In the present situation, it would be appropriate that a more comprehensive view of infrastructure is taken covering, beside economic hardcore, social infrastructure as well as institutional infrastructure. For developing the human resources of the country, it is important that we do not neglect social infrastructure.
2. For deciding the allocations of various items of infrastructure, scientific criterion should be evolved which would require detailed social cost-benefit analysis of different

types of infrastructure.

3. Similarly, greater attention should be paid for analysing the various technological options for providing the same type of facility having due regard to their implications in terms of costs, resource use, environmental effects, employment potential, efficiency, etc.
4. It is also important that the quality of project formulation should be improved. All the aspects of the project should be considered in-depth before committing large funds on them. The manpower and other requirements of the project should also be planned ahead, using modern techniques so that bottle-necks do not arise at the implementation level.
5. In view of the general inadequacy of infrastructure in the country, we have to follow, in general, the policy of building up ahead of demand. For this purpose, detailed projections of demand and supply have to be made on a realistic basis, though in a changing situation, they have to be frequently revised. Such projections are needed not only at the macro-level but also for different states and regions of the country.
6. An integrated approach has to be followed in planning for infrastructure development so that the necessary linkages are assured. Provision of one or two services at a place may not be adequate to attract investment, hence a package approach has to be adopted, so that the various complementary services are made available simultaneously. Integration has to be not only among various services, but also among different stages to ensure timely development of supporting facilities so that created capacities are not left under utilized.
7. The urban bias in the provision of infrastructure facilities should also be checked with a view to redress the rural-urban disparity in the availability of social services. This is called for not only because the majority of population lives in the villages but also because the development of rural economy is vital for the overall economic development in the country. Therefore, the requirements of the rural economy should be given full consideration while planning the growth of infrastructure.
8. Infrastructure development has close links with the objective of employment generation. Not only large scale employment is generated during the stage of construction of infrastructure projects which are often labour intensive in nature, in the provision of these facilities also a large number of people find employment. This aspect of infrastructure planning should also be given due consideration so that employment

planning is properly enmeshed with infrastructure planning. A number of plan programmes, like NREP and RLEGP, etc., provide a suitable base for the simultaneous creation of infrastructure and employment. Care should be taken that the assets created under these programmes are of a durable nature and fit into the overall plan for the infrastructure development of the district.

9. The development of infrastructure can play a vital role in achieving the objective of balanced regional development as the lack of infrastructure is at the root of the problem of inter-state and inter-regional economic development. In the backward regions and districts, adequate infrastructure will have to be provided. However, in the initial stages of development, there may not be enough resources for meeting the requirements of all the regions fully. Therefore, a policy of concentrated decentralization may be adopted. It goes without saying that certain minimum level of infrastructure facilities has to be made available in all parts of the country. The minimum needs programmes (MNP) under the plans aim at this. Efforts should be made to see that each district or block is ensured the minimum accepted norm for which a list of the blocks and districts which are lagging behind the norms with respect to different services should be prepared and concentrated effort should be made to bring them up to the accepted norm. This would mean that the priorities for developing infrastructure should be devised keeping in mind the specific situation prevailing in different districts and blocks.

Beyond providing the minimum level a policy of concentrated effort may be more useful given the overall resource scarcity. This can be done by providing a package of different services simultaneously at selected points which are showing signs of relatively faster progress. These points should be selected carefully at the district level. The central place theory and the concept of growth centres provide the scientific basis for the selection of these points.

While formulating the plan for infrastructure development, different regions, the specialization of regions should also be kept in mind. Those facilities should be provided in a region which are in accordance with the needs of the economic base of that particular region.

It needs to be mentioned that provision of infrastructure alone may not be sufficient to initiate the process of development at least over a short period. Therefore, there should be proper integration between investment on

infrastructure and that on productive activities. Infrastructure planning is, thus, one component in the overall strategy of promoting the development of the backward regions. Therefore, simultaneously with the creation of infrastructure, other incentives and facilities should also be provided to promote investment in productive activities in the region. Wherever needed, the state may take the initiative in establishing enterprises in the public sector in these regions. Regional development corporations, which have been created in some states like Uttar Pradesh, can play a useful role in this regard.

10. The process of implementation has also to be streamlined specially in the case of large projects. Improvement in plan formulation itself will contribute to a better implementation. This should be supplemented by a strict monitoring of the projects and timely and quick decision for removing the financial and other bottle-necks.
11. Finally, there is much scope for improvement in the working of the public sector enterprises responsible for the provision of different public utilities. This would require a number of efforts, including adoption of a professional management approach, stoppage of political interference, proper personnel policies, adequate provision for the maintenance, timely replacement of worn-out equipment, stoppage of leakages and pilferages, strict realisation of dues, etc. Closely linked with the issue of the efficient running of these enterprises is the question of the appropriate price policy for public utilities. Comprehensive guidelines should be laid down in this respect after taking into account the various issues involved.

CONCLUSION

Infrastructure development has been an important dimension of our development plans. However, neither the assumptions underlying infrastructure development have been subject to an in-depth analysis nor its contribution to the achievement of the development objectives fully assessed. The planning input going into this sector was also not commensurate with the large allocations in favour of this sector. We have indicated the various inadequacies that have characterized infrastructure planning in the country and highlighted the issues which should be kept in mind in formulating a comprehensive and integrated plan for infrastructure development. It is hoped that if proper attention is paid to these aspects in the light of our

suggestions, infrastructure will become not only a more powerful tool for removing regional imbalances and promoting development and improving the quality of life of the people, but also much better returns will be secured from the heavy investments already made in the area under the various plans.

District Planning Process—A Case Study in Karnataka*

L. SHRIDHARAN

WHILE REFERENCE to district planning exists since the Second Plan, the Planning Commission suggested states to initiate it under the Fourth Plan and issued a detailed guidelines for the purpose.¹ In accordance with this, Karnataka initiated district planning with the commencement of Fifth Five Year Plan in 1974-75. This paper attempts to review the experience of nearly a decade in this regard through a case study of a sample district in the state. The paper looks into the planning process in general and in the district and makes some observations on them. This is followed by a section on related financial aspects in district planning. A discussion was also held with key district officials on the problems faced by them on plan formulation and implementation. Finally some suggestions are made. With focus on the process, the choice of the district itself was not of much significance.

THE PROCESS²

Under the Fifth Plan, a District and Regional Planning Division was setup in the Planning Department at the State level and district planning officers appointed in each district. A short training programme was organised to acquaint the District Planning Officers with the issues in and methodology of district planning. Subsequently, they prepared a draft Integrated District Development Plan of perspective nature spanning 1974 to 1984 for their respective districts.

At the organisational level there is a District Planning Committee

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in each district comprising of Project Director, District Rural Development Society; General Manager, District Industries Centre; District Development Assistant; District Publicity Officer; District Statistical Officer and District Planning Officer (Member-Secretary), headed by the Deputy Commissioner. This body is responsible for the initiation of the first draft on district plan which is then placed before the District Development Council for approval (with or without modifications). The Council consists of all MPs, MLAs, MLCs of the district, the TDB Presidents and all officers of the district with the Deputy Commissioner as the Chairman. With this basic introduction, we shall discuss the process.

In the early stages, the process mainly consisted of communicating the state level sectoral financial allocations to the State Heads of Departments, who in turn communicated the district allocations to their counterparts in the districts. While there was no assessment of the relative needs at the state level, the district heads prepared schemes in departmental isolation. Thus, district plan essentially turned out to be an aggregation of departmental schemes. With a view to integrate sectoral and spatial aspects of planning in view of local resource endowments and needs, District Sector Schemes were delineated in early 1978 based on whether a scheme benefits a district and its people, and whether it can be planned and implemented at the district and lower levels without any adverse implications for integration of district plan with the state plan. For the 1978-79 Annual Plan, 75 per cent of the District Sector outlay at the state level was allocated among district on an objective basis, keeping the other 25 per cent as a cushion to make up deficiencies in the distribution of plan benefits or to accelerate some priority programmes in selected districts. The lumpsum outlay thus conveyed was to be apportioned over the departments by the District Planning Committee in consultation with their heads. The draft plan evolved by them was to be first approved by the District Development Council and then by the Government both with or without modifications. For implementation, the State Departmental heads released funds out of the approved outlay at the request of their district level counterparts. This process continued till 1981-82. A team for quarterly review of progress of implementation was constituted in 1980-81 consisting of district departmental heads and the District Planning Officer, headed by the Deputy Commissioner.

In 1982-83, the sectoral outlay at the district level was indicated from the state level in effect withdrawing the freedom of the district in deciding the departmental allocations, as the plans received from the districts tended to include state sector, central sector and non-plan schemes also.

Generally the planning process began at the district level around February for the coming year and it was well within the year by the time the district received the plan finally approved by the Government. A distinct departure from this pattern emerged under 1983-84 plan. The process was initiated by July 1982 with the draft plan approved by the DDC and sent to Government by September 1982. The plan finally approved by the Government was received by the first week of April 1983 by the district. This schedule still continues. During this year, minor headwise allocations for each sector at the district level were indicated by the state level, thus curtailing the freedom at the sectoral level also in the district. This measure was with a view to bridge the gap between what is proposed by the district and what is approved by the state. As a compensatory measure, a discretionary outlay of Rs.750 lakh (to be divided over the districts based on an objective criterion) was introduced to encourage initiation of schemes³ of local importance by the DDC on its own.

A new dimension was introduced in April 1983 by asking the districts to provide schemewise monthly break-up of physical and financial targets for the approved district plan and the districts were to adhere to it strictly. In case of any unspent amount in a quarter, it could be revived only by convincing the Development Commissioner of the state. The monthly progress of physical and financial achievements was also to be filed in a similar proforma to the state by the 20th of the following month. Monthly state level reviews were to take place by the 30th of the month.

A similar approach continued for 1984-85 also. The 1985-86 plan saw a departure from the minor headwise allocation pattern. The districts were suggested to formulate plan for different sectors assuming a 10 per cent increase over the approved outlay of 1984-85 for the respective sectors. The schemewise allocation was left to the departmental heads. The plan formulation was to be on the monthly multi-level review proforma. Monthly reviews were also to be filed on the same proforma.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

We shall make here some general observations on the process as also observations from the experience in the sample district:

1. It is to the credit of Karnataka that the plan process for the subsequent year now regularly begins by August of the current year and the various steps are carried out as per schedule. The plan duly approved by the Government reaches the district

Planning Office which were obtained from the individual departments by this office earlier. The DPO did express doubts about a total reliability of these data. Attempts to obtain these data from individual departments failed with all of them not providing the information and the concerned clerks interpreting the information sought in their own ways. Consequently, we have analysed the data supplied by the DPO in the hope of gaining some general understanding. Information on residuary sector consisting of all special programmes initiated by the state and the centre were obtained from the District Rural Development Society. To save space, these data are not reproduced here.⁶ The broad conclusions reached are:

1. The OAPD for the District Sector Schemes has gone up by nearly three times between 1978-79 and 1983-84 and so has the expenditure incurred (EI). Even if discounted for inflation, it does signify an increased availability of funds at the district level though the share of district sector schemes may not have gone up significantly.
2. The OAPD generally tends to be between 70 and 80 per cent of the OADDC for the district sector as a whole. This, however, does not imply a uniform slashing of OADDC by the Planning Department over the sectors with sometimes even a rise in the OAPD as compared to OADDC and sometimes the items completely dropped. Such drastic changes at the state level of OADDC are justified on the grounds of bringing the District Plans in tune with the national and state priorities. While to an extent, the DDC may propose a higher outlay in anticipation of a slash from the state level, the significant fluctuation in the percentage of OAPD against OADDC from 100 over the sectors (roughly in the range of 50 to 130 though sometimes it is as high as 190) points essentially to a poor communication of the national and state priorities to the districts and an absence of a realistic indication of the financial availability to the districts. These run counter to the very concepts of district planning being evolved against local potentials and resources. These problems should be tackled through better communications and understanding between the state and the districts, and through suitable training of the district level staff.
3. Since OADDC may be considered notional insofar as the final outlay is OAPD, a comparison of BRHD against OAPD was attempted. While BRHD was often significantly less than the OAPD ranging between 75 and 90 per cent (though it was 102 per

cent in 1978-79) for the District Sector Schemes as a whole, it fluctuated widely over the sectors. In a number of sectors, including key sectors like agriculture, soil and water conservation, horticulture, minor irrigation, etc., often the BRHD was far below the OAPD. Given OAPD, the reasons for low BRHD are not clear. On the other hand, in a number of departments, the BRHD exceeds OAPD (ranging between 130 and 300 per cent). When enquired, the departmental heads said that some additional approval must have come during the year, though they could not provide any details as most of them had taken over the positions only recently. Thus, there appears to be a mismatch between planning (as approved by the Planning Department) and its actual implementation as reflected through financial provisions. Thus, a serious attention needs to be paid to the financial matching of planning and of implementation at different levels.

4. When all district sector schemes are taken together, the EI is lower than BRHD, though close to 100 per cent. However, considerable under-expenditure (sometimes as low as 40 per cent) and sometimes over expenditure against BRHD are observed over the individual sectors. No clear reasons were offered on enquiry.
5. Financially speaking, planning can be said to be realised through the expenditure incurred. In this sense, the realisation for district sector schemes as a whole fluctuate between 49.0 per cent (1982-83) and 92.5 per cent (1983-84) of OAPD, it being only around 68.8 per cent for the period 1978-84 taken as a whole. Considerable over-expenditures and under-expenditures against OAPD are observed at the level of individual sectors. While the reasons for these are not clear, they can be only symptomatic of some serious deficiencies in both our planning and implementation systems.
6. Observations very similar to the above ones hold good for the residuary sector also.
7. A number of state sector schemes are also implemented by the districts. It would be reasonable to assume that observations similar to the above ones hold good for them also. Thus, the situation warrants an immediate attention.

A DISCUSSION WITH SENIOR DISTRICT OFFICIALS

A discussion was held with senior district officials of the sample district on the problems of district planning. The following

observations emerged:

1. It was pointed out that district plan in a broader sense must encompass the state sector schemes being implemented at the district level which form a sizable chunk. This reality should be taken into account while planning for the district. This implies that the state sector plan should be ready and communicated to the districts before the district plan can be prepared. As this may not be feasible in practice, the district plan should at least take cognisance of the on-going schemes of the state sector in the district.
2. The officials pointed out the 'policing' nature of our administrative system than it being production and purpose oriented. Thus, while the system comes down strongly on a negative aspect, it hardly provides for an appreciation of good work, individual initiative, etc. This in effect questions the crux of our administrative system and needs being looked into urgently.
3. The problem of inter-departmental/inter-official coordination was noted to be mainly a problem of human ego. Thus, it needs a very tactful handling of his counterparts in other departments and the subordinates by the concerned official whether it is at the level of Deputy Commissioner or the District Departmental Heads. Solution can emerge only through an appreciation of their mutual roles. Suitable training in inter-personal and organisation behaviour may be useful in this regard. This view was endorsed by the senior district officials.
4. According to the Deputy Commissioner, the prevalence of stronger departmental loyalty as opposed to horizontal loyalty does not pose any difficulty in coordinating the various district level activities. However, officials handling matters on behalf of the Deputy Commissioner do express this difficulty. An effective solution to this problem is a re-organisation of the district administration in tune with the area planning concepts advocated for district planning. This point has been elaborated elsewhere.⁷
5. On the issue of frequent transfer of key district officials, the authorities felt that though it disrupts developmental activities, vested interests may develop if they are posted at one place for more than 3 years. This view seems to emanate from the 'policing role' of administration. To believe that most of the officials staying beyond 3 years will develop a vested interest in the area seems to be an exaggeration. The

five year duration suggested by the recent working group on District Planning seems appropriate.⁸

6. The Deputy Commissioner of the sample district considered the current role of District Planning Officer adequate. He also did not feel the need for a district level monitoring body (either independent or under the DPO) when asked. However, the DPO presently seems to mainly provide secretarial assistance in planning related matters to the Deputy Commissioner. As suggested by the working group on District Planning, this position needs to be headed by an officer whose status is next only to that of the Deputy Commissioner. Such an officer should undergo training in broad national/regional issue and priorities, area planning techniques, organisation behaviour, etc., on the one hand and should have leadership qualities and capacity to handle human engineering problems (particularly in the context of bringing about inter-departmental coordination) on the other.
7. As for unconventional approaches, i.e., not submitting to standard norms prescribed), it was pointed out that such departures are not questioned from the state level, provided the concerned Deputy Commissioner has okayed them. However, the advantage of this flexibility has been taken only on a few occasions. This flexibility, if properly utilised, can bring a sea change in district planning.
8. Senior district officials were not aware of the details of Lakhina experiment⁹ of reforms in Ahmednagar Collectorate administration. It is important that the details of this experiment are widely circulated to all the districts in the country for suitable emulation. The district officials were also not aware of the working group report on district planning which was out then for more than a year. This report too should be circulated in all the districts.
9. It is often pointed out that political and administrative superiors are basically opposed to decentralisation as it means delegating more power to lower order units, which are otherwise held by them in their respective spheres. In this regard, we can only say that a genuine political commitment in favour of decentralisation and district planning is a must.

SUGGESTIONS

The close link between multi-level planning and decentralisation itself arises out of our constitutional faith in democratic decentralisation which provides the basic framework for

decentralisation in planning. Our suggestions given below follow from this tenet and our earlier observations:

1. A substantial portion of the available funds at the district level get committed to on-going and spill-over schemes. This necessitates us to take a long-term view of district planning against the national-state priorities; and local needs and potentials. Thus long/medium term district plans should be prepared from which annual plans can be apportioned and passed by the state assembly. Such an approach will develop an overall understanding of the district economy and help in monitoring the progress, apart from throwing up the peculiar setting (economic/social/physical) of the district. To accommodate such peculiarities and exploit the potentials of the district better, it may be necessary to deviate from national and state priorities at this level, ensuring an overall balance at the state level. Such an exercise can be undertaken only against a long/medium term plan.
2. While schemes are assessed in terms of financial and physical targets achieved, no attempts are made to assess their economic and/or social impacts on the district economy. In view of its importance, such a role should be assigned to a monitoring and evaluation cell under the District Planning Officer.
3. The roll of District Planning Officer and his team needs to be identified clearly, and accordingly supported and upgraded. The state should be able to establish a better rapport with the districts so that resorting to administrative prescriptions can be avoided. It is essential that the District Planning Officer, his team and others (at least the various district departmental heads) connected with planning and implementation are trained to have a broad outlook on the economy; technical skills of project planning, management, monitoring and evaluation; area planning concepts and skills; leadership and motivational and organisational behaviour skills to overcome the human ego problems at different levels, etc.
4. The District Plans are prepared for the financial year and the District Credit Plans are prepared for the calendar year. While there are reasons for both being as they are, attempts should be made to break-up the District Credit Plan into quarterly modules which enable its alignment with the branch performance budget on the one hand and facilitate integration with the District Plan on the other. The fact that District

Plans are prepared in time with monthly break-ups in Karnataka should be very helpful in preparing the District Credit Plan and its quarterly modules.

5. In general, it is felt that there is scope for improving/rationalising/simplifying the administrative procedures for liaisoning between a state and its districts, within a district among different departments, the general administrative procedures, etc., in addition to the scope for the improvement in record/filing systems. As noted by Prof. Nanjundappa¹⁰, Planning Secretary of Karnataka, in district development, planning, programmes should be integrated first horizontally and then inter-district, vertical sectoral integration should be achieved. He also suggested a change in the accounting system in tune with the spirits of decentralisation. It may be advisable to appoint a committee in each state to evolve simplified and efficient administrative procedures to facilitate decentralisation. Such a body should keep in view the recommendations of the Committee on Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes released recently.¹¹
6. Public participation is essential for the success of decentralisation and development. It has been pointed out that Panchayati Raj bodies have often acted as hand-maidens of vested interests. Such misuses should be off set by including representatives of the dispossessed in these institutions and through the right to recall a member if he does not serve the interest of the people. People's Participation can be sought in other ways also. Recently Gujarat introduced an incentive outlay for the districts against which a matching contribution of 50 per cent or 25 per cent depending on the backwardness of the area had to be raised locally. The approach proved very successful with the people's contribution coming to 96 per cent of the targetted amount in 1982-83. Innovative schemes, like rural fire-fighting arrangements, purchase of laproscopic machines for tubectomy operations, para-medical vans, pipeline and stand-posts for water-supply, electrification of street lights in Harijan colonies, etc., emerged on local initiative.¹² Such examples should be emulated.
7. The approach in our planning at all levels has been highly resource oriented, resource in the financial sense. Attempts to explore non-conventional resources, particularly at the district and lower levels should be made. Thus, the vast manpower resource, better management and utilisation of water, use/adoption of local resources/methods in activities of

government or otherwise will go a long way in making our efforts of decentralisation a success. Finally, one can only emphasize the need for a change in attitude through a genuine commitment and will in favour of decentralisation, at the political and administrative levels accompanied by delegation of authority to appropriate levels. As noted by late Shri D.P. Dhar,¹³ former Union Minister for Planning, power "is something that comes from new ways of doing things in new combinations and in new institutions" and "not something that one is holding on to". This vital fact needs to be recognised.

In conclusion, inasfar as our planning and administrative systems are broadly similar over the state, we believe a number of these findings will hold good for other states also and the suggestions useful to them.

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Relationship between the Government of Meghalaya and Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council Since 1978 : A Review

ERBANORIS JYRWA and SOLOMON GABRIEL

THE SIXTH Schedule to the Constitution of India enumerates powers and functions of Autonomous District Councils in Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura and Mizoram and these councils aim at protection and advancement of the culture of the tribal people of these states. The United Khasi-Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council, which came into existence on June 27, 1952, was bifurcated into Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council and Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council on February 1, 1966. The Khasi Hills, which covers almost half of the area of the State of Meghalaya, is inhabited mainly by the Khasi tribe. In the following pages the relationship between the Government of Meghalaya and the Khasi Hills District Council has been examined in respect of Governor's approval/assent to the rules and regulations/bills passed by the District Council and the management of primary education by the Khasi Hills District Council since 1978.

I

All rules and regulations/bills passed by the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council came into effect on receiving the approval/assent of the Governor of Meghalaya.¹ The Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council has on July 27, 1981, passed a resolution which stated that the Governor withholding his assent to the bills passed by the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council was "an unwanted interference in the way the Khasi people want to manage their own affairs".² The Governor of Meghalaya gives his approval/assent to the rules and regulations/bills on the advice of the Government of Meghalaya. Since 1978, all the rules and regulations passed by the District Council have got the approval of the Governor, but 5 out of 8 bills did not get his assent.

The Establishment, Management and Control of Markets Regulation, 1979, provides that a market can be established in the district only with the permission of the Council and that the Council can collect

tolls on the goods entering the market.³ The Management and Control of Forest (2nd Amendment) Act, 1979, prescribes punishment for persons who illegally cut trees.⁴ The Management and Control of Forest (3rd Amendment) Act, 1980, provides the conditions under which felling of trees may be exempted.⁵ The Appointment and Succession of Chiefs and Headmen Act, 1979⁶, as well as the Appointment and Succession of Chiefs and Headmen (Fifth Amendment) Act, 1980, indicate the conditions under which the Executive Committee of the District Council can temporarily take over the administration of a village from a village Chief.⁷ The Trading by Non-Tribals(3rd Amendment) Regulation, 1979, provides that when a person is found to be carrying on trade or business without a valid trade licence, the commodities traded, including the tools and equipments used for trade or business, are liable for seizure.⁸ The Trading by Non-tribals Regulation(Fourth Amendment) 1982, empowers an authorised officer of the Council to enter a shop or a shop-cum-residence for the purpose of checking the trade or for the purpose of seizing the commodities.⁹

The Administration of Justice(First Amendment) Rules, 1980, provides that the District Council Court should be a Court of appeal in respect of all suits and cases where the parties to a case are tribals.¹⁰

The Constitution of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (Tenth Amendment) Rules, 1979, provides that the lone nominated member should be appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Council. The Governor returned the bill to the Council with the advice that the rule should only provide that the Council could recommend the name of the nominated member to the Governor.¹¹ The bill was then passed incorporating this advice of the Governor. All the above mentioned rules and regulations/bills (acts) received the governor's approval/assent.

The Primary Education Regulation Act, 1980, did not get the assent of the Governor. It provides that no primary school should be established by any person or any organisation without the permission of the Executive Committee of the District Council and that any primary school which has not obtained such a permission would not be eligible to send its pupils for sitting in the primary and lower primary school leaving certificate examinations and would not be entitled to receive any grant-in-aid from the Council.¹² The Governor did not give his reason for withholding his assent to the bill. It may be observed that in the Khasi Hills District, compared to the schools under the control of the District Council, the quality of teaching in some of the private schools in the Khasi Hills District is better. In fact, some of the private schools of the district can be rated among the best schools of the country. Thus, it appears that the Governor

wants the status quo to continue for the sake of the quality of education in these schools.

The Inheritance of Self-Acquired Property Act, 1980, did not get the assent of the Governor¹³ because the Advocate-General to the Government of Meghalaya expressed the view that the relevant provisions of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, with suitable modifications, might profitably be extended to the Khasi Hills District, rather than enacting a separate Act for it.¹⁴

The Khasi Social Custom of Lineage Act, 1980, mainly provides that any Khasi who adopts a personal law which is not compatible with the Khasi social custom concerning lineage as laid down under this Act, follows a way of life non-compatible with the Khasi way of life and is not accepted as a Khasi by the Khasi clan Durbar, would cease to be a Khasi. The Act further provides that any person of a Khasi father and a non-Khasi mother shall be a Khasi provided that he has adopted Khasi social custom of the father and that the clan Durbar is satisfied that he has been observing the required Khasi custom.¹⁵ The Governor has not given his assent to this Act nor has he given any reason for withholding his assent. The Governor did not give his assent because in his view the bill was not properly drafted.¹⁶

The Governor did not give his assent to the Cattle and Other Animal Taxation Regulation Act, 1980, because he wanted certain modifications in clauses 3, 5, 13, 14 and 15 of the Act.¹⁷ Clauses 14 and 15 of the Act were only modified by the Council in line with the advice given by the Governor. Clause 3 of the Act provides that all cattle of one year and above, kept or reared for trade or for professional milking or for butchering, should be taxed and that no cattle reared domestically by indigenous inhabitants should be taxed. The Governor in his message on June 8, 1982, indicated that clause 3, which empowers the District Council to levy tax on animals, was "not properly defined"¹⁸; but the District Council did not agree with the Governor. It appears that the Government of Meghalaya did not want to bring any discrimination to the people in the milking profession on the basis of their being indigenous and non-indigenous people. Clause 5 of the Act provides that no cattle should be kept or reared for commercial purposes except under a permit issued by an authorised officer of the Council. The view of the Governor that the regulation of the rearing of cattle was a function which "did not fall within the legislative competency of the Council"¹⁹, was not acceptable to the Council. Clause 13 of the Act provides that the number of cattle of each stall or grazing shed should not exceed 10 in case of buffaloes, 25 in case of cows, but in case of mixed cattle consisting of buffaloes and cows, the maximum of buffaloes should be five and the maximum of cows should be 10. Clause 13 further provides that in

case of sheep and goats or pigs the number should not exceed 40 and that the number of cattle can only be increased under a special permission of the Executive Committee.²⁰

The Governor objected to this clause on the ground that it is "not proper to control the number of cattle owned by an individual."²¹ It may be pointed out here that since the number of goats, pigs, cows and buffaloes may increase in course of time, it is practically not possible to limit their number. Since the Council stick to its stand in not making any change in clauses 3, 5, and 13 of the Act,²² in spite of the views of the Governor, the latter did not give his assent to the Act as a whole.

The Establishment of Village and Town Police Force Act, 1985, provides for the establishment of a separate village and town police force in the district under the control and supervision of the District Council.²³ But the Governor has not given assent to this Act till date; it appears that the Government of Meghalaya is not in favour of creating another police force in the district apart from the Meghalaya police.

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman and Members of the Executive Committee, Salaries and Allowances (Fifth Amendment) Act, 1987, raises the salaries and allowances of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and the Members of the Executive Committee of the District Council; the Act has not received the assent of the Governor till date.²⁴ The Members' Salaries and Allowances (Fourth Amendment) Act, 1987, which provides for the increase of the salaries and allowance of the members of the Council, has also yet to receive the assent of the Governor.²⁵

The Administration and Election of Sirdar of Wahlong Act, 1985, which provides for uniting Byrong Sirdarship and Mawthong-Sohkhyllung Sirdarship and also for the appointment of Wahlong Sirdarship²⁶ received the assent of the Governor.

The Management and Control of Forest (Fourth Amendment) Act, 1987, which provides that all forest officers would be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of the Indian Penal Code;²⁷ received the assent of the Governor.

The Administration of Justice (Second Amendment) Rules, 1986, provide that there would be a village court for each village and that two or more villages may together form one village court and that there would be a Subordinate District Council Court at Shillong. It further provides that the courts of the Syiems, Lyngdohs, Wahadadar, Sirdars would be Additional Subordinate District Council Court and that a Subordinate District Council Court or Additional Subordinate District Council would exercise such powers as defined in Chapter III of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. It was approved by the

Governor.²⁸ The Administration of Justice (Third Amendment) Rules, 1987, which provide that there would be one Additional Subordinate District Council for the Khasi Hills Autonomous District and that it would be called the "Khasi Hills Additional District Council Court" and would be presided over by a Judicial Officer designated as Additional Judge,²⁹ received the assent of the Governor.

A resolution passed by the Council on April 17, 1980, provides that if a rule, regulation/bill, after it was sent by the Governor for reconsideration by the Council and was passed by the Council again by a two-third majority of the members present and voting with or without the amendment suggested by the Governor, it should receive the approval/assent of the Governor.³⁰ It may be pointed out that even a State Legislature in India does not possess a similar power. The Governor of a State can reserve a bill passed by a State Legislative Assembly for the consideration of the President of India.³¹ In this connection, it may be observed that it is essential that the Governor must retain his power to give or withhold his approval/assent to a regulation or rule/bill passed by the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council because the Governor has to consider any regulation or rule or bill from the point of view of the interests of the Khasi community and other residents of the State of Meghalaya and, above all, the interests of the nation.

The Executive Committee of the Council rightly pointed out to the Sarkaria Commission on October 2, 1985, that the District Council's Inheritance of Self-Acquired Property Act, 1980, did not receive the Governor's assent because the Government of Meghalaya felt that the relevant portions of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, would suitably be made applicable and that no separate Act was necessary; but the Government of Meghalaya introduced in the State Legislative Assembly in June 1984, a similar bill, the Khasi-Jaintia Succession to Self-Acquired Property, special provision Bill, 1984,³² and the Assembly also passed it.

At present, the previous approval of the Governor of Meghalaya is necessary before the District Council can even discuss and pass a rule, regulation or a bill. It is suggested here that the provision for the previous approval of the Governor be done away with, as the Governor has the power ultimately either to give or to withhold his approval/assent to a rule, regulation or a bill passed by the District Council.

II

At present, there are about 2,500 teachers on the pay rolls of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council and about 32,000 students are

enrolled in the District Council primary schools. The primary schools are managed by the District Council, but most of the expenditure incurred on them, including the salaries of the teachers and inspecting staff, are met from the grants provided by the Government of Meghalaya. But according to the Executive Committee of the District Council, many a times the teachers are not paid their salaries in time because the grants are not received in time. But the Government of Meghalaya claimed that it is trying to meet the requirements of the District Council as far as possible. According to the State Government, the delay in the disbursement of grant to the District Council is due to the fact that the District Council does not submit its full statement of accounts and utilisation certificate in time. The Government contends that the grants given specifically for primary education were utilised by the Council for other purposes, like the general administrative expenditure of the Council, etc., and that such utilisation of funds by the Council led to the dislocation of funds often resulting in not having enough money at the disposal of the Council to pay the full salaries of the teachers of the primary schools, particularly since 1982.³³ The Government of Meghalaya appointed a One-man Commission of inquiry³⁴ headed by Justice S.K. Dutta (retd.), Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court, on December 20, 1983, to go into the question of validity of the District Council diverting the funds given for primary education by the Government to meet other expenses of the Council.

The Commission came to the conclusion that such diversion of grants was not proper and it recommended the taking over of the administration of the primary education by the Government from the Council³⁵ and the Government took over the control of primary education in the Khasi Hills on February 29, 1984. As of today, it remains under the State Government. The Teachers' Association of the Primary Schools in the Khasi Hills supports the permanent taking over of the management of primary education by the Government of Meghalaya from the District Council as only then they will be sure of their salaries being paid in full on time.³⁶ The teachers of the primary schools would not have made such a demand if the District Council had been paying their salaries in time. The District Council could not pay their salaries regularly because it did not have sufficient funds at its disposal. The Government of Meghalaya did not promptly release the District Council's share of funds relating to professional tax, mineral tax and motor vehicles tax which had been collected by it on behalf of the latter.³⁷ According to the Council, the Government of Meghalaya had released only on September 1, 1984, a lump sum of Rs. 6,33,795 on account of professional tax to the Council for the years 1970-71 to 1982-83.³⁸ The Government of Meghalaya has been

paying every year the Council's share of the taxes on minerals and motor vehicles only in the form of advances. This practice on the part of the Government has been extended to cover professional tax since 1983-84. Further, the Government of Meghalaya ever since it came into existence in 1972, according to the Council, has not been revealing to the Council the actual amount of funds collected by it on professional tax, mineral tax and motor vehicles tax. This policy of the Government needs to be reviewed as the Council has the right to know the amount of taxes collected by the Government every year.

It may be pertinent to point out here that the District Councils deserve to be seen as essential political institutions by the Government of Meghalaya. Even after the establishment of the State of Meghalaya, the three District Councils in Meghalaya have not become superfluous as there is a need to maintain them for protecting and advancing the specific and distinct cultures of the three main tribes of Meghalaya—the Khasi, the Jaintia and the Garo. Moreover, the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, for example, has been providing the Khasis of Meghalaya a good training in local self-government as they do not even have Panchayats.

It may be suggested that the Government of India should allot more funds to the District Councils in Meghalaya, as it has done recently in the case of District Councils in Mizoram³⁹ so that the District Councils in Meghalaya can discharge properly and efficiently its functions in consonance with the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

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to removed and of financial assistance will be
 provided, (Killing in the name of the
 Government, etc., etc.)

and the Government of India has also
 been providing financial assistance to
 the Government of India for the purpose of
 the development of the country.

Public Corporations in Developed Countries : A Canadian Case

P.K. KURUVILLA

IN RECENT years, public corporations have been increasingly used as instruments for implementing badly needed economic development programmes in many newly developing countries all over the world. Lately, a number of articles and books dealing with many common problems facing these corporations have also been appearing in the literature on politics and government of developing countries. Some of the basic problems facing public corporations in these countries, generally identified and analysed by several authors, include the following:

1. Failure of political and administrative leaders to establish clear, concise, and administratively implementable goals for the corporations;
2. Inadequate political priority and support for the corporate programmes once they are established, especially during their implementation stage;
3. Weak administrative capacity of the corporations because of scarcity of resources, such as men, material and money;
4. Unfair competition from their private sector competitors as the state artificially shelters them from the normal discipline of market forces;
5. Inability to improve relations between the management and the workers;
6. Persistent failure to make profits or even to break even; difficulty to fulfil the broad social and political objectives expected of them; and
7. Insufficient observance of accountability to legislatures and governments and poor responsiveness to the needs of the public they are intended to serve.

Many of these studies seem to suggest that, given their current conditions of economic and administrative underdevelopment, these

problems are fundamentally peculiar to and inevitable in the newly developing countries. The central purpose of this article is to single out and analyse the case of a major public (Crown) corporation in Canada—Canada Post Corporation—and to contend through this case study that, contrary to the commonly held assumption, certain public enterprises in the economically developed countries also continue to be constrained by a conglomeration of complex economic and administrative problems for which there are no easy and immediate solutions in sight. Although it is clearly impossible to establish with any degree of certainty and definitude the generalisability of the findings from a single case study such as this, it is hoped that it could at least provide a few small helpful stimulants and pointers in the direction of much needed and useful comparative research and theory building.

The Canada Post Corporation is one of the most wellknown and largest Crown corporations in Canada. It operates more than 8,000 offices and employs in excess of 60,000 people. It also has more than 13,000 postal outlets in stores across Canada. It handles about 8 billion pieces of mail a year and its annual revenues exceed \$2.75 billion. The real property assets alone are valued at around \$2 billion. The Canada Post Corporation was established in October 1981 as the successor to the Department of Post Office. Over a number of preceding years, the Post Office Department had been besieged by a plethora of messy problems. In a way, the decision to convert the Post Office Department into a Crown corporation represented a desperate, last-ditch effort on the part of the then Government to disengage itself from that messy bog.

First of all, for a number of years, the postal rates had been soaring steadily but the Postal services had been becoming more and more inefficient and unreliable. Secondly, the increasing postal rates had also been accompanied by massive deficits for the Post Office. In the early 1960's, the share of postal costs that was subsidised through general taxes averaged about 14 per cent. By 1975, it had risen to 49 per cent. Thirdly, there had been immense problem with the massive programme of mechanisation which the Post Office had embarked upon in the early 1970s. Even before the programme was completed, a number of competent observers had concluded that the bulk of the machinery had already become obsolete. Fourthly, the long-standing stormy labour-management relations in the Post Office were becoming even worse. There were a number of nasty labour disputes which periodically led to costly legal or illegal strikes or slow-downs. Finally, there were also a host of 'horror' stories coming out of the Post Office Department, including those of periodic thefts of goods and widespread vandalism and wilful damage to property. In a

nutshell, it was against such a bleak backdrop of deep-rooted problems that the Government decided to bring in legislation to create the new Crown Corporation. When the Government established the Corporation, it had directed it through the Canada Post Corporation Act to work towards a host of important objectives which included:

1. An efficient national postal service capable of responding to the changing social and communication needs of Canada;
2. An universal and vastly improved and accessible mail service;
3. Deficit reduction and financial self-sufficiency;
4. A more efficient and improved management system; and
5. Maintenance of more tranquil employer-employee relations and labour peace.

Today, however, after half a dozen years, when one looks back and assesses the degree of success the Corporation has had in fulfilling its mandate, the impression one gets is, by and large, a negative one.

First, concerning the twin objectives of ensuring an efficient, universal and accessible national postal service capable of meeting the communication needs of Canadians, the Corporation has not yet been able to register any significant improvement over what its predecessor department did. As a committee, that reviewed the mandate and productivity of the corporation, noted in its report in 1985, the corporation's *raison d'être* is unquestionably service, that is, the pick-up and delivery of mail. But many Canadians across the country have been constantly complaining about unreliability, slowness and a host of inefficiencies in the delivery of the mail.¹ To make matters worse, in recent years, in an effort to contain costs, the corporation has been curtailing many customary services, including rural delivery from six days a week to five and business deliveries from twice daily to once. Moreover, if two of the major proposals contained in a five-year business plan recently unveiled by the corporation are going to be implemented, it would mean even more reduced services than at present to many parts of the country. These proposals call for the closing of some 1,700 smallest rural Post Offices and eliminating laneway mail delivery for an estimated 100,000 rural customers as well as making so-called supermail box services the norm for new sub-divisions and many rural areas instead of home delivery or laneway service. At the moment, some 150,000 customer denied door-to-door service are waiting in line for the boxes and the network is expected to grow at a rate of 100,000 a year. The business plan also calls for elimination of 8,700 jobs in the next several years and farming out of many current services to private business.

Secondly, concerning the corporation's much publicised objective of financial self-sufficiency, on closer scrutiny, the present picture and the prognosis appear far less rosy than those painted by the corporation. Notwithstanding all the optimistic projections presented by the corporation, particularly in view of its uninterrupted history of hefty annual losses and deficits, it seems extremely doubtful whether it would ever reach the goal of financial self-sufficiency unless the Government itself comes to its rescue periodically. It is true that corporation did manage to reduce its annual deficit from \$ 558 million in its first year of operations (1981-82) to \$ 243 million in 1985-86. And, as its five-year business plan announced in 1986 claims, its operating budget might further drop to \$ 132 million in 1987-88. However, as the Review Committee noted in its report, an extremely important point in this regard is that reduction of deficits in the past has always been achieved largely through the increased revenues generated by price increases and restrictions in capital spending rather than by any significant elimination of waste and inefficiency or by productivity growth.²

Business mail is the major source of Canada Post's revenues. In 1985-86, almost 70 per cent of the corporation's revenue came from first class mail and most of it was business mail. It is estimated that approximately 70 per cent of all first class mail is transactional: bills, cheques, and mortgage payments. While junk mail volumes increased by 60 per cent between 1981 and 1985, first class mail volumes remained virtually constant. A basic problem facing the Post Office today is that businesses are increasingly turning to other methods, including electronic messaging to handle their transactions. A rate increase that came into existence in 1984, the greatest single increase for first class postage in the country's history (the largest in both absolute-- 13 cent--and percentage terms 76 per cent) and two smaller subsequent increases in 1983 and 1985 doubled the price of first class mail in the four years since the corporation came into existence. In addition, Canada Post is at present for regular increases in stamp prices over the next five years on top of the two cents rise in first class postage prices and an average 9 per cent price increase in commercial rates that came into effect on April 1, 1987. Over and above such hefty price hikes, the corporation's ambitious long-term plan to wipe out its deficits and to break even by 1988 is also predicated on certain fundamental policy modifications in several crucial areas, such as how, how fast and how frequently Canadians should receive their mail, how much extra money the Corporation must be allowed to extract from the Government in a variety of novel ways, and how the corporation should

calculate its deficit itself in the future.

For instance, besides closing hundreds of smaller rural Post Offices and cancelling home delivery or laneway service to hundreds of homes especially in new subdivisions mentioned earlier, the Post Office's plan envisages many other major changes which will undoubtedly affect the nature and quality of Canada's postal network. These include, among other things, turning over about 3,500 largest rural Post Offices to private contractors and adopting a more stretched-out delivery schedule by moving away from the current next day delivery system within the same city for first class mail and setting two days as the delivery standard for the same, three days for delivery within a province, and four days to major out-of-province destinations.

The corporation's plan to attain financial self-sufficiency by 1988 also visualizes collecting vast amounts of extra money from the Government in a variety of novel ways in the coming years. For example, starting from 1988, the Government is going to cease collecting interest on the money it holds in its accounts for things such as outstanding postal money orders and permit the Post Office to collect such interests which will give the latter close to \$ 40 million a year. Similarly, the Government should also fully compensate the Post Office for all the subsidised free mail services the latter now operates for the federal departments, the northern regions of Canada, the blind, and the members of Parliament, which will mean close to another \$ 30 million a year. The Post Office is also going to be permitted to phase out, over a few years, a \$ 170 million 'cultural mail' subsidy covering newspaper and magazines.

Furthermore, there will also be certain major changes in the way the Post Office deficit will be calculated in the future. Contrary to the past practice of counting capital spending for items, such as new equipment as part of Canada Post's overall deficit, the Government will now fund such acquisitions separately. The Post Office will not have to show such expenses as part of its deficit. This could mean an extra \$ 103 million in federal contributions to Canada Post this year and a further \$ 161 million next year which the corporation will not have to take into consideration while calculating its deficit. It goes without saying that as long as Canada Post is destined to erase its deficit almost exclusively at the expense of drastically diluted services and through sizable price increases and a steady extraction of enormous sums of money from the Government itself rather than through any significant belt-tightening or productivity growth of its own, it would hardly be a financial improvement from the days of the Government department it replaced.

Thirdly, concerning the objective of a more efficient management

system, the progress has been much less remarkable than the corporation has been claiming. The management of the corporation has been an embarrassing mess in many ways. For instance, productivity has been slumping despite mechanisation. For a number of years now, there has been a phenomenal amount of automation in the Post Office. But it has not brought about a corresponding degree of increase in productivity or decrease in the total employment of labour, especially in the technical support and administrative staff areas. Similarly, while there has been some increase in the total mail processed by Canada Post, evidently it has not produced a proportionate increase in the corporation's revenues. On the contrary, it has been accompanied by appreciable additions to overhead costs, with no apparent savings or service improvements to the consumers. As the Review Committee pointed out in its report in 1972, the US and Canadian postal systems were roughly equivalent in processing of units or mail in constant dollars. By 1984, however, the US output had outshipped Canada's by more than 50 per cent. So also, in 1984 letter carriers were absent 17.7 days on an average due to illness or injury on the job (62 per cent of the absentees claimed illness), compared to six days for Canadian workers as a whole. It is important to recall that after a thorough review of the performance of the corporation, the Committee concluded that Canada Post was exceptionally expensive, in part, because it was exceptionally inefficient.³

Fourthly, since its inception the Post Office Corporation has been unable to insulate itself from the poisonous political interference from the Government in many areas of its management. Ideally, to be successful, the operation of the corporation should be as much at arm's length from the Government as possible. However, directorships of Crown corporations have often been juicy plums in Government's patronage baskets and the Post Office Corporation has been no exception to this. The practice of the Governor-in-Council appointing and fixing the salary and terms of office of the President and the Directors of the Post Office and the Board of Directors then appointing and fixing the salary of as many Vice-Presidents as it considers necessary has also been open to abuses. The Corporation also has had the dubious practice of drawing members of its Board of Directors from the ranks of organised labour, particularly from the active leadership of the postal unions themselves. As the Review Committee correctly observed, it is imperative that all Directors of the Board act and be seen to act in the best interest of the corporation and, therefore, it is improper for these positions to be filled from the active leadership of the postal unions.⁴ Political interference has been a problem for the Post Office in another form as well. There are scores of local post offices that are big and chronic money losers.

But the corporation is unable to close them and save money because of the ever present pressure from politicians. Undue political influence has always been disheartening to the talented and meritorious people, especially at the middle management level, while they seek to improve the system.

Fifthly, as far as labour relations are concerned, it is true that, since the creation of the legislation, until June this year, when the 20,500 member Letter Carriers union resorted to a series of rotating strikes which lasted for nearly three weeks, Canadians had not experienced any severe service disruptions caused by strikes by postmen. The last serious postal strike was in 1981 and lasted 42 days. However, as the Review Committee had pointed out, it must not be overlooked that for a full two years of that period, strikes were effectively eliminated in federal jurisdictions by an anti-inflation legislation imposed by the Government. It is also true that at other times while they have not resorted to strike, the employees have not hesitated to use the leverage of their right to strike to secure "singularly cushy and protective deals" for themselves. As the Review Committee further pointed out, it is also noteworthy that, contrary to what the management has been claiming, the employee unions have been consistently complaining that there has not been any improvement at all in the day-to-day labour management in the Corporation.⁵

In this context, it is interesting that recently in opposition to the business plan unveiled by the management, the employee unions have come up with a ten-point programme of their own for improving the postal service. Their programme puts better service to the public ahead of deficit cutting and suggests that the deficit should be reduced by boosting postal revenues rather than by cutting costs. Also, as they see it, there is no pressing need for any arbitrarily set dates for making the post office financially self-sufficient. At present, they are also engaged in an expensive nationwide public relations campaign to convince the public that their own programme which proposes, among other things, a five-day week door-to-door delivery for all but the smallest towns, faster and more reliable service, and longer hours at postal wickets, is a lot more beneficial to the public than the long-term plan proposed by the corporation. It is indeed ironic that first the postal unions extracted a series of excessive salary settlements and extravagant terms and conditions of service in recent years for their members which have naturally boosted the wage cost of the corporation out of line with many private sector companies; then they pose as sincere allies of the public in its battles against the corporation for better services.

As mentioned earlier, the Post Office is currently operating under a five-year plan which includes a goal of eliminating its deficit by

next year. During the recent contract negotiations between the management and the Letter Carriers Union, the former tried to slash labour costs by rolling back some of the benefits won by the employees in earlier contracts, such as reduced workload, and a no-layoff guarantee. The management also demanded a host of work rule changes, such as greater use of employee-owned vehicles instead of public transit, many more delivery stops by the letter carriers each day than at present, and a two-tier wage system under which new employees would be permanently paid less than current workers. But when the union refused to budge and staged series of rotating strikes, which also led to many ugly scenes of violence on picket lines, the management quickly caved in and acceded to almost all the major demands of the union, including even withdrawing the criminal charges laid against those postmen who perpetrated acts of violence during the strike.

Finally, in recent years, there has been a great deal of expansion and growth of private sector competition in a number of areas of activity, such as delivery of parcels and correspondence traditionally handled by the Post Office. The Canada Post Corporation Act has given the Corporation the exclusive privilege of collecting, transmitting and delivering letters within Canada. However, such privilege does not cover items, such as magazines, books or parcels. There are certain other exceptions as well to this. For example, competitors are allowed to carry letters of an urgent nature provided they charge a rate at least three times as much as the Post Office does. Over the years, a number of courier services and even a few airlines have entered this field with considerable success. The frequency and threat of strikes and walkouts which has interfered with the delivery of mails by the Post Office has understandably been an important factor in the evolution of these private services. As long as Canada Post continues to be perceived as unreliable and open to periodic disruptions through strikes and walkouts, private carriers stand to profit at the expense of the Post Office.⁶

Now that the Post Office has consistently and convincingly failed both as a department and as a corporation to fulfil its basic objectives, and there are no real prospects for it to fare any better in the foreseeable future, there are many people in the country who feel that the Post Office needs to be fundamentally reformed and that the necessary reforms will not occur until all or at least parts of it are put in private hands. However, as the Review Committee noted in its report, the Post Office's continuing history of annual financial losses and chronic labour unrest make it an unattractive candidate for sale in its entirety as going concern. "Even if it were given away, the newly established corporation with no history of prior

earnings would find it virtually impossible to arrange adequate financing in the private money market. To turn Canada Post over to the private sector and then provide the new Corporation with Government grants and guarantees would hardly satisfy the objective of reducing the real and potential drain on the Treasury, and hence, on the taxpayers. Under such circumstances, although the present ruling party is symbolically a party of free enterprise and is formally committed to an agenda of privatisation, the possibility of turning the Post Office over to the private sector is not yet being seriously considered by the Government. Meanwhile, the Post Office Corporation continues to suffer from serious financial difficulties, worst labour-management relations, declining public support, growing competition from its private sector competitors and poisonous political interference.

To conclude, generalising from a single example and case study is always problematic. It may neither provide the necessary degree of specificity nor do justice to all relevant material. It may not also be sufficient to substantiate a general hypothesis with any degree of precision and accuracy. Nevertheless, from this brief account about one of the largest public corporations in Canada, hopefully, some support will be found for the simple hypothesis advanced at the outset of this article that despite the enormous resource base and the strengths of the economies of the developed countries, as in developing countries, some of their public corporations also continue to experience a variety of serious economic and administrative problems which defy easy solutions.

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NOTE--1

Saptapadi : A Programme for Revitalisation of Office of Collector of Bombay City and Bombay Suburban District

AWADHESH P. SINHA

THE COLLECTOR in India is a unique public functionary. He is the head of an office consisting of a large number of branches and sections performing functions on behalf of different departments of a State Government. He also controls and supervises certain other offices in a district which have been subordinated to him. Finally, he is the coordinator of all district-level State Government offices and agencies. As such, he is a chief among equals and is expected to ensure that the district administration consisting of his own office, his subordinate offices and other offices work harmoniously as a team.

The success of Collector in this triple role depends, in a large measure, on how effectively his own office works. It was, therefore, decided at the end of 1985 to launch a comprehensive and integrated programme for revitalisation of Collector's office at Old Custom House, Bombay.

The need for revitalisation was obvious. Over the years, branches and sections had been created and abolished in response to itinerant needs, so that the organisational structure had become misshapen. The distribution of work among officers and subordinate staff had not been done in a planned manner, leading to duplication, overlapping and evasion of responsibility. The confusion was worst confounded by branches and sections being haphazardly scattered in different parts of a huge three-storied building. This not only made effective supervision impossible but also caused inconvenience to members of public visiting the office for their work. The seating arrangement satisfied no criteria of rationality, such as flow of papers and pattern of supervision. The office was full of broken and unsuitable furniture. There were heaps of unsorted-out papers laden with cobwebs and dust. There was no placement policy to ensure the right man for every job. There was no provision for training of personnel. Even some of the common features of Collector's offices in other districts, such as Central Record Room, Central Registry, Enquiry

Counters, etc., were conspicuous by their absence. As far as work disposal is concerned, there was no time-bound programme, no periodical reviews and no inspections. It was obvious that this could not be allowed to continue any longer.

At the beginning of 1986, Saptapadi Programme was launched for revitalisation of the Collector's office. The programme had the following objectives:

1. Reorienting administration towards public;
2. Increasing productivity, both quantitatively and qualitatively;
3. Improving working conditions; and
4. Efficient use of manpower and other resources.

The programme embodied several well-known management techniques, such as: organisation planning, zero base budgeting, job analysis and job designing, management by objectives, quality circles, and method study.

As the name suggests, the Saptapadi Programme consisted of the following seven steps:

1. Reorganisation of office and formulation of job charts;
2. Re-allotment of office space, rationalisation of seating arrangements, refurnishing of office, where necessary, and general improvement of work environment;
3. Rationalisation of placement of personnel and introduction of a system for their training;
4. Sorting out of current papers in the Branches (Six Bundle System);
5. Reorganisation of Central Record Room (A-B-C-D System);
6. Improvement in methods and procedures of work; and
7. Introduction of systems of time-bound work disposal, periodical reviews and inspections.

The office was reorganised to provide for a three-tier structure--branches, sections and tables. The branches were patterned on the departmental structure in Mantralaya, to facilitate communication between the State Government and the Collector's office. Each branch was placed under the charge of a Class I gazetted officer. Where necessary, branches were divided into sections, each in the charge of a Class II gazetted officer. Finally, sections were divided into work stations, known as Tables.

Job charts, laying down responsibility of each Table and, thus, of every section and branch, were formulated in consultation with the

Class I gazetted officer heading the branch, the Class II gazetted officer heading the section, and the person working at the work station or Table in question. This chart fixed responsibility for all work required to be done in the office. In that sense, it is really a responsibility chart.

The office having been, thus, reorganised and the responsibility of every person manning work stations having been laid down, the office space was reallocated to integrate the branches, sections and Tables in space. The work station or Table arrangements were rationalised to reflect the flow of papers and pattern of control. The office was refurnished, where necessary, usually by simply remodelling existing furniture according to requirement. In the process, 312 items of broken and unsuitable furniture were removed and disposed of. The office was cleaned and adequate provision was made for ventilation and light. All these measures resulted in a clean and aesthetically appealing work environment. Incidentally, this was achieved without any significant additional expenditure.

The record of every officer and subordinate staff working in the office was scrutinised with the objective of having the right person for every job. The work on formulating a programme for training every category of office functionary commenced.

Papers are the wherewithal of office work. On their management depends, to a large extent, the ability of the office to deliver the goods. The "Six Bundle System" for management of current papers was revived. It brought orderliness to current papers. In the process, 6,415 kgs. of waste paper (raddi) were got rid of, enlarging office space, facilitating retrieval of current papers and bringing a neat sum of money to the public exchequer.

Apart from current papers, there are recorded papers. Earlier, they were lying in the branches, mixed with current papers. A Central Record Room was created. The Recorded papers were properly stored, branch and sectionwise.

It is not enough to improve office organisation. It is also necessary to improve methods and procedures of work. Accordingly, a Central Registry was created. It began to handle all incoming and outgoing papers for the Collector's office. An enquiry counter was opened to guide members of public visiting the office. As many as 18 service counters were provided where members of public can expect to have their work attended to in a well-regulated hassle-free manner. These service counters are organised on the principle that no member of the public should be required to contact more than one counter for his work. The service counters function through the Three Slip System. On approaching the relevant service counter, the person with work at the office is given a handout showing how to apply. On his

presenting his application, the application is scrutinised to see that it is complete in all respects. He is then given a Call Slip, acknowledging his application and informing him of the date on which he may come, if he so desires, to collect the communication informing him of the results of his application. On the call day, he is informed in writing of his application having been either granted or rejected with reasons for rejection. In a few exceptional cases, he may be issued an Additional Document Requisition Slip to clarify any ambiguities in his application and the documents earlier presented by him. In such cases, he is given a second Call Slip for communication of final decision on his application.

As a part of improvement in methods and procedures of work, land revenue records and operations concerning leases in the City of Bombay have been computerised. This is the first instance of computerisation of revenue records in the country.

The final and most decisive step of the Saptapadi Programme has been introduction of a system of time-bound work disposal. It is proposed to clear all pending work till the cut-off date by the end of December, 1987. Every work originating after the cut-off date is required to be disposed of within prescribed time limit.

Whether this is happening or not, is watched through monthly reports submitted to the Collector and also through quarterly review meetings. For this, a carefully considered annual calendar of meetings has been prepared. These meetings are meant to assess progress, identify problems and work out solutions through detailed discussions with all concerned. It is proposed to back these devices by a well-conceived programme of inspections.

The achievements under the Saptapadi Programme have been significant. But much remains to be done. The officers and staff at Old Custom House continue to toil to achieve what, for them, has become a dream: the dream of giving to the First City of India a district administration worthy of its name.

BOOK REVIEWS

Beyond Bureaucracy--Strategic Management of Social Development

JOHN C. ICKIS, EDILBERTO DE JESUS, RUSHIKESH MARU, West Hartford (Connecticut, USA), Kumarian Press, 1987, pp. 256.

This book is a sequel to the popular **Bureaucracy and the Poor: Closing the Gap** which emphasised the organisational and managerial barriers to social development. It examines Third World experience in the application of four concepts for social development.

The first and central concept is strategic management, which has been dealt with by Samuel Paul in the first chapter. Paul defines strategy management to mean the study of top management interventions which influence the design and orchestration of the strategy, organisational structures, and processes of a programme in relation to its environment. He has examined this concept in the context of six development programmes, four of which are from Asian countries. Surprisingly, a number of common features have emerged from a comparative analysis of the strategies of these six programmes and Paul has put them forward in the form of 16 propositions. Paul also recognises that effective community participation is an indicator of success in development programmes and that in almost all the high performing programmes, the leaders were people who stayed on their jobs for reasonably long periods.

The second part of this book on building self-reliant communities contains two contributions. The first is by Ranjit Gupta, on the Jwaja experiment in Ajmer District of Rajasthan, India. In this project, the focus was on developing rural people's abilities to identify opportunities to raise resources and to manage their own affairs. This action research project has revealed that the threshold of risk taking was very low in poor communities, that learning is facilitated when it is contextually relevant to villagers and that the experimentors also make mistakes. In the Jwaja experiment, contrary to the popular belief, the rural people found it much easier to learn new technologies related to their activities than to learn how to work in groups. Felipe B. Alfonso's paper provides a summary of three case studies dealing with the mobilisation of three rural

communities, undertaken by non-government organisations in the Philippines. Alfonso concludes that the starting point for mobilisation depends upon the community's felt needs, the mandate of the change agent and the latter's capacity and skills. For a successful beginning, it is necessary that these three aspects have a proper fit among themselves. In terms of the process of community mobilisation, both the Indian and Philippine experiences show that the best way to approach a community is to address its felt needs. This second concept, to which the book addresses itself, is the concept of empowerment for which the social development process seeks to build capacity or to empower client populations.

The third concept which this book examines for managing social development, is environment. This encompasses the social, economic, cultural and political context that grows or limits opportunities for social development. The thrust in this section of the book, comprising three papers, is that from a realisation that percolation of benefits to the poor was not taking place, emerged the concept of programmes especially designed for the poor. However, this resulted in the creation of continued dependence of the poor on the development agency. Thus, now a third phase of development has emerged based upon people-centered participative social development. Silvio De Franco's paper is based upon the Nicaraguan coffee production situation. It shows how the survival strategies of the rural poor in Nicaragua, were influenced by inter-dependence in the economic system and by public policies. Anil Bhatt's analysis of the Indian bureaucracy brings out the importance of political systems and political behaviour as critical factors in development. He refers to independent India throwing out colonial style bureaucracy without examining its culture of integrity, commitment to the policies and programmes of the duly constituted political authority and impartiality. Bhatt feels that the favourite prescriptions for development over the years have been through decentralisation and participation. However, the participation has been confined to elite sections of the rural society comprising large and medium size farmers belonging to middle and lower middle class who control rural institutions and the rural development programmes. He feels that they effectively block the flow of benefits to the rural poor. Bhatt also refers to an extra governmental elite placing demands on the bureaucracy. Bhatt's analysis implies that management skills will have to go far beyond the bureaucratic arena and work more closely with political parties and community action groups. Marc Lindenberg analyses the Central American political environment to show how high levels of violence and rules of the international systems unfavourable to national development make it difficult to achieve social development through

participative, people-centered programmes and projects. He highlights the relevance of the international economic and political environments in determining the climate as well as the rules of the game within which social development takes place at the local level. Lindenberg also documents INCAE's (Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas) efforts to reduce violence in Central America through seminars and interaction with key elite groups.

The fourth concept for social development, which this book examines, is that of bureaucratic reorientation (BRO). This reorientation is not a one-time task but a continuous learning process. Buenaventura F. Canto III has studied two planning experiences in the Philippines. According to him, the promotion of a bottom-up approach in planning may require the discarding or substantial modification of long established planning and budgeting process in which some people may have developed vested interests. Rushikesh Maru, Nirmala Murthy and J.K. Satia have discussed the Indian Population Programme and the role of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) in this process, in the study of Uttar Pradesh. They had to cope with inadequacies in the planning and monitoring systems, personnel lacking requisite attitudes and skills and the problem of coordination with other institutions. They have felt that since national institutions, such as IIMA, cannot provide continuous consulting services, their effort should rather be directed towards institution building and training of trainers. Ashok Subramanian, in his paper, analyses the process strategies used by a type of voluntary health agencies (VAs)--religious orders in India--struggling with the change. He concludes that in the absence of revolutionary changes in society, the evolution of counter models is likely to be a gradual process. John C. Ickis, in his paper, refers to the efforts on a governmental institution Fondo Nacional de Preinversion (FONAPRE) in Ecuador, in using training as an instrument for bureaucratic change. FONAPRE's efforts were to develop the capacity of local governments to design and implement their own projects. The 'Flying Circus' refers to the team of FONAPRE professionals and external consultants which periodically visited the group of municipalities selected to receive training and technical assistance. Finally, in this section on BRO, the paper by Edilberto C. de Jesus, Jr. refers to the action research programme conducted by the Asian Institute of Management, Manila, Philippines in the National Irrigation Administration (NIA). This project aimed at developing new skills, both within the agency as well as in the communities which it served. While engineers had to learn how to deal with community organisers and irrigator's associations, farmers had to learn how to work with each other and the NIA bureaucracy. Here too, training was a key entry point for change.

Jesus, Jr. concludes that BRO may boil down to the search for and the nurturing of champions committed to acting on the basis of a new strategic vision.

In the concluding section, David C. Korten reviews the development of these four concepts for social development and highlights the importance of values in creating a strategic culture within the social development organisation. Korten succinctly describes management as a process of mobilising resources towards a purpose. Further, that it is inevitably value driven with respect to the choice of both purpose and means. He suggests that the implementation of a people-centered development model demands not just the re-orientation but the total transformation of the agency, that bureaucratic management poorly serves the requirements of people-centered development. Therefore, rather than a re-orientation of development bureaucracy, Korten calls for their de-bureaucratisation or their transformation into strategic organisations. Finally, Korten defines the critical element for strategic management as the total organisational capacity for continuous, creative and pro-active responsiveness to a rapidly changing environment.

This book provides stimulating reading for all those interested in developmental activities. It provides insight into efforts made across the continents in the field of social and rural development. The papers in this book are, particularly, concerned with the process involved in social development. The four concepts for social development-- strategic management, empowerment, environment and bureaucratic re-orientation--have been looked at in a variety of settings. The book provides excellent reading for development managers, management and public administration training institutes and for the policy makers and senior administrators.

--INDERJIT KHANNA

Project Appraisal--A Third World Viewpoint

P.K. MATTOO, New Delhi, Lancer International, pp. 159 Rs. 140.00.

Projects are the building blocks for any economy. Most developing countries are feverishly engaged in developmental activities and investing enormous resources in projects of various kinds and purposes. Though their anxiety to take a quantum leap into the industrial and technology revolution has become a desperate necessity for their survival and sometimes in their anxiety to improve the lives of billions of people living in the Third World countries, yet enough thought has not been given to the type of projects suitable to

these countries. As pointed out by the author, adoption of Northern models pre-supposes existence of highly evolved techno-managerial systems and well developed infrastructure facilities available in developed countries and these are used without realising that such systems and facilities are either not at all available in the Third World Countries or wherever available, have still a long way to go before becoming fully functional. The author rightly points out that a need has arisen of evolving methodologies, procedures and practices which can meet the realities of project situations in the Third World countries.

Whether the projects succeed or fail, depends largely on how well they are conceived, identified and appraised. The book takes an in-depth look on the various aspects of project appraisal. It is the experience of developing countries that unless projects are formulated scientifically and carefully, developmental effort can be frustrated by several failures, such as cost over-runs and time over-runs. In these days of inflationary pressures, such performance failures not only cause a further shrinkage of already scarce resources, but also result in human misery of considerable proportions. As rightly emphasised by the author, good intentions are not enough. The investment scene in the Third World countries is cluttered with the debris of projects which should never have been taken up for implementation in the first instance. Mattoo has correctly pointed out that internal consistency and external compatibility are the two basic attributes of viable projects. The author has emphasised that the schedule of resource requirements of a project portrays its total input profile, which includes not only the material resources which will form the standing assets of the project or which will be consumed in the process throughout but also the human skills which will be needed both for the implementation of the project as also its subsequent successful run. Even in our country, there are a large number of projects which have proved too costly for our economy and were taken up without a proper scientific analysis and appraisal of the progress.

In this context, project appraisal is of vital importance and Mattoo by bringing out his book on the subject has done a singular service to promote developmental plans on correct lines. His book provides an over-view of various theories holding the field and helps the reader to assess the various project strategies and the pitfalls in the way of project implementation. Mattoo is erudite without being pedantic and, as such, provides a realistic conceptual framework for measuring performance. There are today many books on project formulation and appraisal, but Mattoo has taken great pains in presenting the project appraisal from the point of view of the

Third World countries. Since the planners in the less developed countries are battling with stagnation as well as inflation and inequitous distribution, appropriate project appraisal is a prerequisite for curing tardiness in performance and shoddy consequences. Mattoo--with his background of engineering, business administration and public administration and his experience as Project Development Adviser in Lesotho--is most suited to write on the subject and has done a great service to all engaged in project appraisal in developing countries.

Free from the usual jargon and cliches, the book provides delectable reading and has to be commended to all earnest students and practitioners of economic development. The author must be congratulated on bringing out one of the best readings on project appraisal.

--B.C. MATHUR

Organisation Behaviour

H. BANERJEE, New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1986, pp. xiv + 324, Rs.40.00.

Banerjee's Organization Behaviour is the revised edition of the book, first published in 1984. The new addition comprises chapters on 'Organization', and 'Organization Change and Development'. Further revision has been made in chapters on 'Motivation', 'Theories of Motivation', 'Group Dynamics', and 'Organization and Environment'. The author attempts presenting thoughts, research and findings of behavioural scientists. The various theories in the field are explained and evaluated. The conceptual framework is made realistic with the help of illustrations and factual data.

Proceeding on the assumption that behaviour is the mirror of mind, the researchers through empirical investigations and other ways developed many general ideas, concepts, and methods regarding understanding, prediction and control of human behaviour in organizations which are made of both individuals and groups. The behaviour in organization results from: (i) formal organization demands, (ii) demands from informal activities, (iii) each individual attempts to fulfil his idiosyncratic needs, and (iv) unique pattern for each organization of the above three levels. It is accepted that unless the manager is in a position to influence the behaviour of people, who work with him, his other measures, including the best design of organization structure and mobilisation of richest material resources, can achieve only partial success.

Among others, the philosophical contribution to behavioural

sciences have been inspired by philosophers like Aristotle's concepts: man by nature is a political animal; Thomas Aquinas idea: man is born to live in a dependent relationship with his fellows; Thomas Hobbes dictum: men were motivated by pleasure that came from attainment of power; Rousseau's social contract theory; G.W.F. Hegel's concept of group mind and Emile Durkheim's concept of integration of members in an organization as fundamental to stability. More recently, Chris Argyris sharpened the idea of the basic incongruity between the needs of the employees and demands of the organization; March and Simon gave the concept of inducement contribution ratio; McGregor emphasised the need of developing other forms of social influences; and Rensis Likert showed the importance of affiliation and group belonging as motivators. Thus, a person can enjoy multiple membership and serve as a linking pin between groups.

One of the challenges before the manager is to know what is in the individual or his environment that energises or sustains behaviour or what specific things motivate people. It is observed that when rank and file workers, the superiors and the higher echelons of management are motivated properly, a kinetic energy is generated which produces tremendous impact not merely on productivity and profits, but also on industrial relations, public image, stability and future progress. In this context, Japanese management is characterised by unusual responsibility for the good of the employees and the exceptional loyalty of the employees to the firm. Through careful planning, restructuring of organization, and reward system, the effort-performance-reward-satisfaction cycle should be integrated into the management system as a whole. In job enrichment programmes, more motivational factors have to be built, in order to enrich it. It is difficult to meet self esteem and self fulfilment needs. The author hopes that in future, self-esteem need will dominate, followed by self-actualization.

Group dynamics lay emphasis on interaction and forces between the members of both formal and informal groups in the overall organization. It has been found that work groups, which provide social stratification, are highly productive. In Japan, group dynamics is characterised by autonomous response to the environment, to overcome ambiguity, to utilise information from the smallest unit of the organization, and spontaneously bring forth high psychological energy on the part of its members. Conflict is inevitable in any organization or even in an individual. However, it is the conflict between the individual and organization and between informal groups and formal organization which poses serious problems. The causes of conflicts and their possible resolution are discussed.

In the classical theories of organization, F.W. Taylor stressed

the need for a scientific approach to management. It gave birth to industrial engineering, but produced dehumanising effects. Henry Foyal concentrated on general administration. The human relation movement was concerned with the motivation of workers and their informal organization. System theory regarded that organization was made up of interdependent factors. The author hopes that in future, the socio-political organization is likely to gain prominence.

Organization development is a programme of planned change which is based on collaboration with individuals and groups that are already working in the organization. Its objective is to undertake self analysis and self improvement. Since environment changes, the organization design should be flexible to change with the environment. There is a need to put more stress in organization development on structural and technological aspects along with behavioural aspects.

The most important leadership function of management is motivating the employees. The leadership behaviour succeeds to the extent that the subordinates see such behaviour as either an immediate source of satisfaction or as an instrument of future satisfaction. It is maintained that leadership training should devote more efforts to teaching leaders how to modify their own environment and their own job so that they fit their style of leadership to the prevailing situation. The author has pointed out that management science, human and material resources and external environment affect managerial and non-managerial performance which in turn affect the effectiveness of an enterprise. Much work needs to be done to understand the ingredients of productivity.

In sum, the book will be of use to practicing managers, teachers and students of social sciences and others interested in understanding behaviour in organization. The reviewer would like the author to include more studies covering researches and efforts at theory and model building from India and other developing countries to make the book more relevant for them. Banerjee deserves the gratitude of the reader for his endeavour.

--P.C. BANSAL

Rural Development in India

S.R. MAHESHWARI, New Delhi, Sage, 1985, pp. 227, Rs. 145.00.

S.R. Maheshwari, a well-known scholar in the field of Political Science and Public Administration, has the credit of producing an insightful treatise on **Rural Development in India: A Public Policy Approach**. Besides offering a wholistic treatment of the subject

matter, the author raises in the book the fundamental question, "What should be the best public policy approach to Rural Development in India: should it be bureaucratic or people's participation oriented?" The answer to this question demands a clear-cut preference for the concept of rural development itself in terms of its objectives. If the objective of rural development in India is ultimately to create a self-helping rural community, it has to rely on people's participation and that also under the auspices of people's representative rural local government institutions, properly known as panchayati raj. This seems to be the overall position that the author takes in the book, which to my way of thinking is also a correct approach. In the words of the author himself:

Rural development programmes in India suffer from a high degree of centralisation as illustrated by the IRDP. This programme has been formulated in great detail at the central level with little flexibility permitted at the implementational level. So much so that it may not be very inappropriate to say that this programme is for the people but certainly not by the people and of the people. India is an example of a country which is seeking to promote rural development purely through its regular bureaucracy with little involvement or participation by the people (p. 217).

The author also reminds us that the term rural development is much more inclusive than what the IRDP stands for today. This logically links up the thought process of the learned author with his preference for the public policy approach. It is, therefore, noteworthy to recall what Maheshwari has to say on this score:

India's rendezvous with rural development began with the commencement of the Community Development Programme which was multi-purpose, extension-oriented and participation seeking in character. From such beginnings, the country has moved to the present Integrated Rural Development Programme, which is plainly an anti-poverty programme, and thereby a departure from the holistic concept of rural development. The IRDP is a bold experiment in positive discrimination, anxious as it is to correct a historic injustice, but the term 'rural development' is actually much more inclusive (pp. 208-209).

Is then IRDP not a misnomer in the context of rural community per se? Again, have we not been retrograde in our approach to rural development, as we tended to move away in its wake from the original

Community Development Programme and its holistic character. The only reform that was needed pertained to the auspices of the Community Development Programme which should be panchayati raj as recommended by Balwantray Mehta Committee Report and its fair trial. But, as the author would put it, "the misfortune of panchayati raj has been that it did not receive fair treatment from the higher level of leadership" (p. 56).

Altogether the book makes us think on issues which have really not been debated in the country against a correct conceptual perspective and in that its abiding value lies.

--IQBAL NARAIN

Issues in Indian Public Administration

PADMA RAMACHANDRAN, New Delhi, Oxford and IBH, 1986, pp. 282, Rs.95.00.

The subject of public administration has been introduced in a number of universities either as a part of courses on subjects, like political science or as an independent subject in its own right. Therefore, enormous literature on public administration is coming up. However, students find very few books which bring to bear an insight into the problems of practical administrators confronting the administration. The present volume is a welcome addition for the students of Indian Public Administration in general and that of state administration in particular. The Institute of Management in Government, Trivandrum, deserves congratulations for taking this venture focused on Kerala administration.

This volume is the first of its kind brought out by Kerala's State Institute of Training as a result of series of lectures delivered by distinguished administrators of Kerala. The issues focused are primarily on the State of Kerala itself by a galaxy of civil servants, who have specialised in different fields of administration. They are of wide spectrum, ranging from the issues in Public Administration and suggested reforms to that of problems in medical education and hospital management divided into 12 chapters. The Editor, Padma Ramachandran, has done well in taking up this pioneering work.

In his "Issues in Public Administration and Suggested Reforms in Kerala", Achutha Menon, former Chief Minister of Kerala concentrates on a couple of urgent matters required in the Secretariat. He suggests the need to decentralise in order to ensure greater participation by citizens. In his analytical presentation, V. Ramachandran has dealt with "Problems of Planning and Financial Administration". He has dealt with limitations of planning of state level and levels

below the state level. He is for adoption of a new approach for decentralisation and calls for measures of how to raise more resources and improve tax administration. In the chapter on Police Administration in Kerala, T. Ananthasankara Iyer, tried innovative approaches in offices like those of Regional Transport Office. The other important issues dealt with are establishment, seniority, discipline, etc., which have a direct impact on the morale and efficiency of police personnel along with a number of suggestions. A.K. Narayanan Nambiar discusses "Management Issues in Education Including Higher and Professional education". He has dealt with nature of issues in educational planning and administration by raising certain questions, such as centralised nature of administration and lack of coordination among various wings of education department. G. Bhaskaran Nair in his "Personnel Management in Government" has emphasised the need to understand the psychology of employees and to inspire them to perform their tasks. In discussing the problems and prospects of introducing management techniques in Government, N. Gopala Krishnan Nair points out that better management means improving results and benefits and, therefore, professional and industrial managers must try to understand the complications arising out of the complexities existing in their organisations. N. Kaleeswaran, in his paper on "Management Issues in Agricultural Development", felt that the state "can do little to decide on price policies for Agricultural Products". He has also raised several other vital issues and made some valid suggestions. In his "Management Issues in the Field of Labour in Kerala", U. Mahabala Rao brings forward the point that management now clearly realises that no factor of production is as important as 'Man' and due consideration has to be given to the men involved for them to contribute to their full potential. In dealing with Management Issues in Programmes For Weaker Section in Kerala, T. Madhava Menon highlights the commitment of the nation to weaker sections as given in Article 46 of our Constitution. He offered several valuable suggestions for the amelioration of this section of society. In his presentation on Management Issues in Social Welfare Programmes, P.K. Gopalakrishnan draws attention to the debate between the protagonists and opponents of Social Welfare spending. In his paper on "Management Issues in Urban Development and Housing", K.C. Sankaranarayanan stated that very few cities are really planned cities. A unified law, he felt, has become a necessity for dealing with several issues connected with the concept of Town Planning. In talking of issues relating to 'Problems in Medical Education and Hospital Management', M. Balaraman Nair has emphasised two facts, namely, that one of the medical colleges in the state has facilities and staff as stipulated by

Indian Medical Council and that annual admissions in each college are far in excess of capacity.

The get up and printing is nice and the Institute has decidedly come to be better known with this first publication.

--HARBANS PATHAK

Public Services In India (An Analysis of Their Consumption in West Bengal)

TARES MAITRA, Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1985, pp. 150, Rs. 70.00.

An attempt has been made in this book to assess, empirically the effects of government expenditure on the distribution of levels of living of people, measured in terms of consumer expenditure, of West Bengal for the year 1976. Three expenditure programmes--(1) Public Distribution of Essential Commodities, (2) Education, and (3) Health and Medical Services--have been chosen for this purpose. Results have been compared with the findings of the study made by the author and others (for the same State) for the year 1964-65 to see whether there was any improvement in the levels of living of the people between 1964-65 and 1976. An attempt also has been made to estimate "Budget Incidence" among people of West Bengal.

The book contains five chapters. In the first chapter, apart from explaining the necessity of assessing the distribution of benefits of government expenditure among different economic groups of people, certain conceptual and methodological issues pertaining to identification of beneficiaries of government expenditure, measurement, valuation and distribution of benefits of government expenditure have been discussed. In the second chapter, some of the characteristics of estimates of total population size of the State, consumer expenditure of the State followed by discussion on defining poverty line have been described. In the third chapter, estimates of inequalities of the distribution of the public services over different fractile groups defined in terms of per capita consumer expenditure, have been presented. In the fourth chapter, estimates of the overall redistributive effect of the public services as well as indirect taxes have been outlined. In the fifth chapter, conclusions have been drawn on the inequality of distribution of consumer expenditure.

The important results of the study are: (1) the inequality is more in rural areas than in urban areas. The reason, according to the author, is the effect of guaranteed supply under the statutory rationing system maintained for the urban areas. Specific concentration coefficients of the distribution of subsidies on rice and wheat

over different fractile groups are 0.056, 0.038 and 0.130 for rural, urban and combined rural and urban areas respectively. (2) There is considerable concentration in the percentage distribution of public education services, received by primary and secondary students over different fractile groups except for primary students in the urban areas. The specific concentration coefficients of the distribution of the education subsidies for the areas of rural, urban, and combined rural and urban are 0.288, 0.207 and 0.289 respectively. An important feature of the distribution of the education services is that it is only when the people are around the poverty line that they begin to get approximately proportional share of them. The farther they are below the poverty line greater is their deprivation from their due share. The author infers that this is a direct consequence of the private costs involved in consumption of the education services. (3) There is less unequal distribution of medical services as compared to the distribution of consumer expenditure. In urban areas, the distribution is unequal in favour of the poor. The specific concentration coefficients of their distribution over fractile groups are 0.074, for rural (-) 0.029 for urban and 0.049 for rural and urban combined. (4) The overall effect of 'Budget Incidence' on the inequality of distribution of consumer expenditure is considerable. After adjusting for indirect taxes and consumption of the public services, the inequality of distribution of consumer expenditure is considerably reduced for both rural and urban areas. The reduction is much more in the case of urban areas than in the case of rural areas. Further, a major part of the reduction takes place when adjustment is made for indirect taxes demonstrating that, apart from the effect of indirect taxes, there is not much redistribution achieved through the observed consumption of the public services. Lorenz ratio for the adjusted consumer expenditure is 0.250 as against 0.280 for the initial consumer expenditure and 0.246 for the post-tax consumer expenditure.

Studies of this type have been very few and the study is a welcome addition. Knowledge of who benefits from government expenditure helps recasting or discontinuing already existing expenditure programmes of government or introducing alternative programmes of expenditure which would attain social justice. The author has made positive contribution to the literature on the distribution of benefits of government expenditure. His approach (inductive approach) is superior to the approach hitherto followed by others in India, e.g., A.P. Gupta (1980) and P.N. Misra (1982).

However, a few comments would perhaps be in order with respect to 'budget incidence' and public education services. With respect to 'budget incidence', there seems to be some ambiguity. According to

him, "the net effect on the personal income/consumption of the payment of taxes and of receipt of services provided through public expenditure is 'Budget Incidence' (p. 3). He does not elaborate this concept. As a result, the reader is in doubt whether the author is referring to 'balanced budget incidence' or something else. In the study, indirect taxes exceed expenditure on public services. Consequently, general level of the distributive schedule, derived from consumption of the public services, may be lower than what would have been if the excess taxes were spent and thus been accounted for in the 'Budget Incidence' analysis. Thus, the existence of surplus (i.e., indirect taxes minus the amount of expenditure accounted for in the analysis) may affect not only the level but also shape of the net distributive pattern. On the revenue side of the budget, Rs. 8.79 per capita indirect tax payment is taken into account, while on the expenditure side only Rs. 3.69 per capita receipt of public services is taken into account. There is a surplus of Rs. 5.10 (i.e., Rs. 8.79 minus Rs. 3.69) in the budget considered here. The net effect of the 'Budget Incidence' on the inequality of distribution of consumer expenditure would certainly have been different from what has been in the present study, had the author taken into account expenditure on other public services--to the extent of Rs. 5.10 per capita--for the analysis.

An alternative way of analysing the net distributive impact of the indirect taxes and the public services would have been by presenting the public services expenditure as a proportion of the indirect tax payment in each fractile group and comparing these proportions with the average for the State of West Bengal as whole.* Thus, if the ratio of the public services to the indirect tax payment is higher for any fractile group than for the state as a whole, it means that fractile group is getting benefits more than what it should get proportionately.

With respect to the utilisation of the public education services, it has been concluded that as long as the fees are not removed and a wide network of text-book libraries is not established, the goal of universal education would be very difficult to achieve (p. 67). It appears, according to the author, that the goal of universal education can be achieved only when these measures are taken. These measures are necessary but not sufficient to encourage the poor

* For more clarification about this method, please see Jallade (1974), "Public Expenditure on Education and Income Distribution in Columbia", *World Bank Staff Occasional Papers*, No. 18, John Hopkins University Press.

parents of children of school-going age to utilise the public education services. Sending a child to school not only involves out-of-pocket costs but also opportunity cost of sending him to school. If, at all, the goal of universal education is to be achieved, the opportunity cost also should be compensated, apart from free education and other related facilities, in the form of either scholarships or free boarding and lodging to all those who can not-afford education.

The utility of the book would have enhanced (particularly for research scholars) if "Questionnaire Schedule" canvassed for the present study were appended. On the whole, it is a useful addition to the growing knowledge on "Benefit Incidence".

--S. SUDHAKAR

Rural Elite, Entrepreneurship and Social Change

RAM SAGAR SINGH, Jaipur, Rawat Publications, 1985, pp. 206, Rs.160.00.

The present study is an intensive empirical study of leadership pattern and entrepreneurship formation in the context of changing rural social structure. The major objective of the study has been to examine the interplay between the forces of economic development (Community Development Programmes) and political development (Panchayat Raj institutions). Bilariagang, a Community Development Block of Azamgarh District (one of the socially and economically backward districts) of UP has been selected as the universe of the study.

Along with a brief discussion of the concept 'leadership' and 'entrepreneurs', the author has critically evaluated various approaches to the study of leadership, entrepreneurship and social change in Indian context in Chapter 1. As the study is primarily concerned with the structural differentiation and transformation in the social institutions of society following socio-economic developments, the author has adopted structural approach. Besides, survey method and interview schedules have also been used.

Of 321 leaders and entrepreneurs selected, 182 are leaders which include both formal and informal leaders, such as members of panchayat samitis, pradhan of village panchayats and political leaders having membership of political parties. In his conceptual framework, the entrepreneurs include "the leading group of cultivators who get higher net returns from their holdings in comparison to other sections of the farmers because they make a rational use of their production factors and adopt technical innovations more quickly and attain high rate of productivity and income by skillful appliance

of modern farming inputs such as irrigation, fertilizers, agricultural practices or by better farm organisation" (pp. 14-15). There are 139 entrepreneurs identified in the Block.

The study reveals a significant coincidence of entrepreneurial roles with political leadership roles. Political power and distribution of developmental programmes have remained confined to the traditionally dominant caste groups, such as Brahmins, Rajputs and Bhumihars. The introduction of democratic decentralisation and other democratic institutions of power has not been able to erode the monopoly of traditional dominant groups and to democratise the power structure. A mild threat to this upper castes dominance is visible from the middle affluent castes, specially Ahirs, but there is hardly any threat from the side of lower castes.

Land has been observed as a decisive factor for entrepreneurship. Successive land reforms and abolition of zamindari system have not been able to exterminate the ex-zamindars, who are found to be entrepreneurs. Education, but not age, is found as a positive factor in entrepreneurship formation.

As regards the value profiles of both leaders and entrepreneurs, in terms of values, such as politicisation, democratisation, universalism, empathy, efficacy, and achievement, more or less same trends are observed. But in comparison to leaders, entrepreneurs are more exposed to mass media, formal and informal organisation. Level of urbanisation and contacts with block officials of both are not fairly good.

However, the study concludes that the democratic decentralisation and introduction of Community Development Programmes, without much of structural changes in Indian society, have strengthened the monopoly of traditionally dominant upper castes and class. The weaker sections of the society have neither been able to enjoy political power nor reap the benefits of the development plans. In other words, democratic institutions and developmental programmes have multiplied the degree of inequality in rural society. Hence, there is a need for basic transformation of these institutions and process of developmental plans.

We find the relevance of Weberian classificatory schema 'class status and power' and their inter-relations in this work. Caste position determines one's political power and political dominance determines his access to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Amidst the bulk of literature on elites, the elite studies have always one basic problem, i.e., define the concept of elite and Singh's work is in no way an exception to it. Nowhere in the book he has made an effort to define this concept, rather he discusses the concept of leadership and various approaches for its study in the

Indian context. Conceptually speaking, elite is a broader category than leader. Like the notion of leader, the notion of elite does not mean one or two outstanding individuals but an organised conscious dominant stratum or group. While member of an elite group prevail and exhibit his excellence in a particular field, a leader prevail over the group with or without the factor of excellence. A leader can be elite and vice-versa, but with the change in their role performances. It is understood that, like most of the scholars, the author has also considered leaders as elites. Our main contention is that, since Singh's study is the study of leadership, it should instead be titled as "Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Social Change".

Author's argument that education is in no way a determining factor for leadership (p. 95) is not supported by data. Table 3 at page 72 reads that out of 182 leaders, 84 per cent of leaders are literate (21.4 per cent can read and write, 41.3 per cent have primary and middle level educational standard, 12.1 per cent have high school and intermediate education and 9.3 per cent of the leaders are graduates and post-graduates) and 15.9 per cent are illiterate. So, contrary to author's argument, it can be argued here that villagers have shown their preference to educated and literate leaders instead of illiterates. In a context, when literacy rate of the whole district is 19.1 per cent, 84 per cent of educated leaders out of 182 in the Block can not be overlooked. Hence, education can be considered as a determining factor.

Besides these shortcomings, a vital information, i.e., 'the year of study' is also missing.

However, despite these weaknesses and omission, the book makes an important contribution to our understanding of leadership pattern and entrepreneurship formation in the context of changing rural social structure. Though, over the years, a number of studies on entrepreneurship in India have been undertaken, yet most of the studies are conducted in the field of industry and business enterprise. Shri Singh is one of the few to make an endeavour to examine the entrepreneurship phenomena in primary sector. Hence he deserves creditability. His methodology is sound and style of writing lucid. It is, therefore, a useful piece of work for the benefit of students, academicians and administrators, who are involved in transformation of rural society.

Theory of Local Government

M.A. MUTTALIB and M. ABKAR ALI KHAN, New Delhi, Sterling, 1982, pp. 271.

Though local governments, in one form or another, are found in many countries of the world, yet few attempts have been made to theorise about their underlying philosophies and functions. Lack of theory has not only affected proper understanding of the role of local governments in a changing and dynamic environment but also compelled local government study to take a back seat among related academic areas, like national government, bureaucracy, etc. Muttalib and Khan's contribution needs to be appreciated against the background of lack of theories about local government.

The authors discuss local government keeping in view the broad socio-politico-economic canvas within which it operates. Conceptually, it is treated as a multi-dimensional concept. So the inherent premise is that theory-building efforts must begin by looking into the conceptual and ecological bases of local government. As a corollary, the authors also present a theory of what they term decentralised development. Two key concepts, popular participation and partnership, are emphasised to provide the basis of a theory of decentralised development. Obviously, the impression one gets here is that decentralised development is possible once popular participation in socio-politico-economic activities is ensured and once a sense of partnership exists between local government, on the one hand, and other levels of government and other agencies and organisations operating at the local level on the other.

Muttalib and Khan then discuss the local government systems of Great Britain, France, West Germany, USA, USSR and India. The discussion shows not only variations of the governance systems at the local level but pinpoint how its form, character, functions and relations with the higher levels of government are shaped by history, culture, polity, economy, geography and demographic profile of a particular country. The authors, therefore, rightly argue that it is futile to label a particular pattern of local government as ideal. One can agree with them when they state that a form of local government is best when it practises democracy in its deliberations, meets local needs through its actions, and suits local conditions and traditions.

In an attempt to provide a theory of a real distribution of power, the authors look for the relationship between area and power in the functioning of a local government. This search leads them to analyse the philosophies, often contradictory, which lie behind a real distribution of power.

The discussion then centres around how governmental power is to be divided among different levels to promote such basic values as liberty, equality and welfare of the masses. They, of course, do not fail to mention that a real division of power is primarily a political act with clear political overtones.

The discussions then move on to the actual working of the local government. Naturally, such important mechanisms as local government council, the committee system, local executive and local bureaucracy and important issues, like local finance, autonomy vs. control and philosophy of local self-governance are given rather exhaustive and enlightened treatment.

The remainder of the book is devoted to theories of local government council, local executive, local finance, autonomy and control. To supplement the theory-building effort, important policy initiating and policy implementing mechanisms, like committees and local bureaucracies are brought into the discussion. Attempts at theory-building has not proved to be an easy task as peculiarities, complexities and diversities in the composition, forms and powers of local government councils in a global context remain ever-present realities. Moreover, as the authors mention, the councils have failed to perform their designated roles properly. The decline of councils in recent years is also related to increase in the power and authority of elected local executives. But local executives are also confronted with a number of problems which include lack of trust between them and local level bureaucrats, lack of interest of broad-based national political parties in local affairs, and domineering attitude of national government functionaries towards local level executives. Increasing use of committees, though an universal practice, has not always resulted in improved performance by the local government councils. The relations between the local executive and council committees has often been affected by mutual distrust.

Local autonomy and central control is a crucial and sensitive area in any study of local government. The authors discuss almost all the dimensions of the autonomy-control continuum in a prudent manner. They realise the difficulty of insisting on a clear-cut division between the functions of local and national government. Local finance is an area which creates discord and disharmony in relations between national and local governments. The issue here is not always the amount of money received by the latter from the former but the resultant control. The control exercised by the national government over grants it provides is usually extensive. The situation is further aggravated by the inability of local governments to mobilise local resources for the expenditure incurred.

In the ultimate analysis, the success and failure of a local

government to act as a grassroots governance system depends upon a number of factors. First, the pattern of decentralisation of authority. Second, the extent of participation of local people. Third, the degree of dependence on national government for grants.

The book will prove useful to students researchers and academic alike.

--MOHAMMAD MOHABBAT KHAN

Voluntary Agencies and Rural Development

I. SATYA SUNDARAM, New Delhi, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1986, pp. ix + 311, Rs.160.00.

The book under review is a sequel to author's earlier books *Anti-Poverty Rural Development in India* and *Consumer Protection in India*.

To bring about development, social transformation and cultural revitalisation in society, especially in a democratic country like ours, peoples' voluntary partnership in the developmental activities becomes more essential and pertinent. Though the state action provides the initiative and leverage, yet in the absence of supportive collective community efforts, the fabric of society remains almost unchanged which leads us nowhere. The author rightly observes in the preface: "A mere bureaucratic approach to the gigantic task of rural reconstruction is not going to achieve either growth or social justice of the required order". Lot has been said by way of criticism of bureaucracy, not only in India, but in all the underdeveloped, developing and even developed countries of the world. But, at the same time, a very simple and straight question could also be asked about the role of people in this regard. Do the people ever realise their 'own' contribution in the nation's well-being and economic growth? Or, have they ever thought of doing something collectively to help themselves? Unless such a self-discipline arises within all of us--collectively--all talks of social awakening and community upliftment are meaningless. Therefore, it should be very clearly understood and fully appreciated by all of us that we 'ourselves' could achieve a lot for ourselves through organised voluntary actions and collective community efforts.

The thesis of the author, "if a task can be performed better by a voluntary agency than by a government department, the Government should not hesitate to hand it over to the former", is a slightly emotionally swayed observation, which could be accepted only with reservations as these organisations are afflicted with very many limitations. The relationship between the Government and non-

Governmental Organisations (NGOs) has to be strengthened and cemented gradually. This becomes more and more significant, especially in the federal structure of Indian polity.

The present study has been divided into eight chapters. In the first introductory chapter, the author has precisely elaborated the concept of development, and has related it to the Indian rural development through the concepts of Gandhian economics of self-reliance. Explaining the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) of the Government of India, he has stressed on the role of people's participation and has emphasised on partnership through 'voluntarism'. At the end of this chapter, Dr. Sundaram has given insights into the future task (of the Government in implementing the antipoverty programmes). He also highlights the age-old grievance that the benefits that flow from various schemes do not reach the poorest of poor.

The second chapter is self-explanatory in its title: "The Changing Role of Voluntary Agencies: From Welfare to Development". Illustrating the dynamic role already played by various NGOs, their rationale and challenging new task of more and more involvement is stressed. The author also expresses a hope for their bright future in the times to come as he perceives a favourable climate for them.

The third chapter points out the "Deficiencies in Development Administration". The author highlights the criticism against bureaucracy. Yet, it is indeed a necessary evil, he concludes. He suggests, "Development, particularly in rural areas, calls for a bureaucracy which is change-oriented, result-oriented and people-oriented."

"Superiority of Voluntary Agencies" is the theme of the fourth chapter. They have an edge over government departments in a number of important spheres. Yet, NGOs have some "Limitations of Voluntarism". This has been explained in the fifth chapter. Lack of professionalism and expertise, funds, people's cooperation and leadership crisis are some of the pitfalls, which could be removed by the "Rapport Between Voluntary Agencies and Government", which is the subject matter of the sixth chapter of the book. To make them real partners in progress, adequate governmental support in ensuring flow of funds, mutual help and trust is a must to the NGOs.

The seventh chapter gives a profile of the "Bhagavatula Charitable Trust (BCT) in Andhra Pradesh". The various developmental and people-oriented activities and achievements of BCT are highlighted here. The success story and reputation of this voluntary body could serve as a model for the social-workers and activists who are really keen to practise voluntarism. The detailed account of the BCT is really encouraging.

The last chapter (eighth) gives "Summary and Conclusions". The author's findings are realistic and practicable. The author has not only examined the various aspects of enlisting support of voluntary organisations, but has also discussed the hidden philosophy of co-ordination in collective efforts, highlighting practical problems of Indian society as a whole. He has identified many causes of the present unhappy situation in which the NGOs are presently caught. The author hopes that his analysis and findings would certainly go a long way to help promote better understanding. Indeed, there is an urgent need for radical structural changes so that NGOs could be encouraged to come forward and willingly face the challenges of the day. They have to be motivated to work collectively, with a view to lifting the country's teeming millions from poverty, unemployment, disease, squalor, illiteracy, ignorance, superstitions, inequality and so many other social evils.

The present study is a welcome addition in the field of voluntarism. For, rural India is the real India true development of India can come about only through rural development.

The work under review is really useful for planners, scholars, researchers, activists, social workers, politicians as well as for the 'Government Desk' looking after implementation of various plans and programmes of the Government. The comprehensive notes, bibliography and index have enhanced the value of the book for further research and detailed study. For its impressive get-up and easy-to-read type-setting, the publisher indeed deserves appreciation for bringing out the book with a moderate price-tag in these days of high price rise.

--OM PRAKASH SETHI

Crime Law and Police Science

JAMES VADACKUMCHERY, Trivandrum, Kairali Books International, 1986, pp. viii + 372, Rs. 160.00.

Investigation of crime is an extremely difficult and delicate exercise for any law-enforcement agency. This is more so perhaps in an accusatorial system of criminal justice as ours in which the whole burden of providing proof rests upon the prosecution while the accused is presumed to be innocent until his guilt is proved beyond any reasonable doubt. Unfortunately, many of the investigating officers do not possess professional skill and techniques required for scientific investigation of crime nor do they have adequate knowledge of law and procedure. "Some of the police officers",

observed The Law Commission of India, "are even unable to appreciate the significance or importance of the prosecution case". While foreign literature on this subject is available in plenty, books based on Indian needs and written by the Indian scholars are scarce.

In this perspective, everyone concerned with law enforcement in India will find Vadackumchery's book timely as well as useful. The book is an outcome of the author's sincere endeavour to analyse various procedures and techniques of scientific investigation of crime and the role, functions and duties of an investigating officer at various stages in the process of investigation. It seeks to integrate various principles of law, police science and behavioural sciences for equipping the law enforcement agencies with the required knowledge to administer criminal justice more effectively and efficiently.

Divided into as many as 13 chapters, the book touches upon every step in investigation of criminal offence--from registration of FIR to the submission of the final report or the charge-sheet to the court of law. The most interesting and informative chapter is that which deals with collection of material evidence and the procedures for their handling, packing and transporting to experts. The chapter on the methods of interrogation of the suspects and interviewing the witnesses by police is equally enlightening. Various legal provisions relating to crime and criminal liability have also been discussed. Several supportive charts and diagrams as well as citation of relevant case laws must have added to the utility of the book.

Surprisingly, the book does not contain any reference to the leading cases decided after 1981 even though it has been published in 1986.

Despite such shortcomings, the book contributes substantially to the scanty literature that exists on the Indian criminal justice system. It may serve as an useful manual to judges, lawyers, investigating officers and other concerned functionaries of criminal justice administration.

Printing errors aside, the book has excellent get-up and the publishers deserve credit for having done a commendable job in bringing out this volume.

--JAYTILAK GUHA ROY

Administrative Tribunals Cases--A Monthly Journal on Service Matters
(Ed.), SURENDRA MALIK, Lucknow, Eastern Book.

In a quest of devising feasible means to provide an alternative forum to ease the ever-increasing arrears and work load of regular courts, the constitution was amended in 1976 and a new chapter on Tribunals has been inserted. This paves the way for tribunalisation as one of the alternative models of administrative justice to meet the challenges of the day. Pursuing the Constitutional provision of Article 323-A, Parliament enacted the Central Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985. The Act provides for adjudication or trial by the Administrative Tribunals of disputes and complaints with respect to recruitment and condition of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with affairs of Union or of any state or of any local or other authority. In accordance with the provisions of the above Act, a number of benches of the Central Administrative Tribunals have been established with the principal bench at New Delhi.

The journal under review is a monthly journal reporting judgements of the Central Administrative Tribunals and those of the Supreme Court on service matters. It is a recent venture of the well known editorial board of the Supreme Court cases and is a welcome addition to the Indian legal literature. Besides, it contains a statutory section on Acts, Rules, Regulations, Notifications, etc., relating to government servants. The well-organised subject index provides an easy access to the finest principle of law involved in a judgement. It is needless to say that this is most comprehensive, accurate and reliable reporting on service matters. A regular subscription of the **Administrative Tribunals Cases** is indispensable for persons of Bench and Bar, academics and others having interest in this branch of law.

--S.S. SINGH

Environment and Development*

RAJIV GANDHI

THE MIRACLES of modern science and the towering achievements of technology have given us a measure of mastery over nature. Economic progress has, however, engendered a callous disregard of the harmony within the ecological system. Therefore, we have to consciously remind ourselves, we are a part of nature. We are a strand in the single fabric whose warp and weft link together all that is of the earth, the water and the air.

We have learnt to our cost that development which destroys the environment eventually destroys development itself. And we have learnt to our benefit that development that conserves the environment conserves also the fruits of development. There is, thus, no fundamental dichotomy between conservation and growth.

Yet, striking the right balance between the environmental imperative and the demands of developments is not that simple. Conservation imposes an escalation in costs. When resources are limited, the increased cost of any one project necessarily means less investment for others. This appears to imply a curtailment of economic growth. When the environment is not protected, damage to the environment will extract its price--from those living in the vicinity, from others at a distance, or even from coming generations.

We do not know enough about the impact on the environment of development decisions. We also do not know enough about how best to offset damage to the environment. There are no easy solutions. Yet, we cannot ignore environmental considerations. We have to strive for the optimum mix through increased knowledge and increased awareness.

GROWING AWARENESS IN INDIA

In India, we are seeing a growing awareness of the symbiotic relationship between the protection of the environment and sustainable development. There is the renowned Chipko Movement in the Himalayas, where women prevent the wanton felling of trees by throwing themselves protectively around tree-trunks. Island communities join hands to stop the coral mining which destroy their lagoons. Villagers band together to stop goats from grazing on the bramble planted to halt the advance of the desert. Environment groups are active. In our Parliament, Members are increasingly receptive to environmental concerns. They are beginning to demand that the conservation of the environment be guaranteed before major development projects are undertaken.

*Text of the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi's address on Environment and Development at the U.N. General Assembly, New York, 19 October 1987.

At one time, environmental issues related mainly to the quality of life of the affluent. Today, in developing countries like ours, we are primarily concerned with the lives of the poorest. When village ponds and wells go dry, it is the poor who trek to ever more distant sources for water. When forests are destroyed, it is the poor who go farther and farther afield in the search for fuel wood. As lands are degraded and forests recede, it is the poor and their animals who, in the dry season, trudge hundreds of kilometers in search of grazing lands. It is the livelihood of the poor and their hopes that shrivel in the arid anguish of drought and are drowned in the raging fury of floods.

It is also the poor who suffer most from pollution. When water-borne epidemics strike the urban slums, it is the poor who are afflicted by disease and even death. When factories spew harmful gases into the air, it is the workers in the nearby housing colonies who suffer the contagion, when industrial units discharge their effluents into the rivers, it is the poor fisherfolk who are deprived of their incomes.

Although they bear the brunt of environmental damage, the poor are themselves little responsible for any of that damage. For centuries they have lived in harmony with nature. The problem is caused by large scale commercial exploitation which garners the profits but escapes the consequences. Yet, when laws are passed and rules are made to conserve the environment the burden falls on those who have gained the least and suffered the most. The people of the forest cannot suddenly be cordoned off from its bounty. Fuel and building materials must be made available at prices they can afford. Shepherd and cow herds must be found alternative pastures or provided fodder. To be effective, conservation must be humane. That is the challenge before us.

A large number of animal and plant species are seriously threatened. Apart from the ethical and aesthetic case for protecting these disappearing species, it is possible answers to unsolved problems of health and survival might be found in the yet undiscovered secrets of these gene pool reserves.

We in India are now developing mechanisms to control pollution and check the deterioration of the environment. We assess the environmental impact of development work so as to harmonize development with the environment. We carry out research and take the results out to the field. We promote environmental awareness among the people. We hope this will lead to greater vision, concern and care in the planning, designing and implementation of development projects. We learn as we go along.

We are trying to integrate these complex environmental issues into our design of development. There are no easy or ready-made answers. In principle, we would wish to give equal priority to development and conservation. In practice, there are major gaps in knowledge, many intangibles and unknown quantities. Experts disagree and assessments vary.

NOT A NATIONAL TASK ALONE

Conservation is not a national task alone. Even as peace is indivisible, so is the world environment. The one world which Jawaharlal Nehru spoke of so often from this very forum is a world which already exists in the physical laws governing the environment.

The environment everywhere is jeopardized by the noxious fumes and life-killing wastes of industrial pollution. The poisoning of the rivers and the seas deprives and endangers all of us, all over the world. The accumulation of carbondioxide in the atmosphere and the threat to the ozone layer put the innocent to as much risk as the polluters themselves.

Worst of all is the passing on of pollution and environmental hazards beyond one's boundaries. There is no political boundary which delimits the spread of poisonous gases, no line on a map which radiation cannot cross, no national frontier at which effluents can be turned back. All those affected by such transnational consequences of environmental damages must have an equal say in the resolution of problems. We must also keep the global commons and space free of environmental depredation. The conservation of the earth's environment has to be ensured through democratic discussions and decisions in international forums.

NEED FOR REDUCTION OF DISPARITIES

The conservation of the world's environment also requires concerted international action to reduce disparities between countries. The compulsions of development and limitations of financial resources tempt many developing countries to exploit their natural resources beyond endurance, ignoring environmental safeguards. If the world economy is to move to more sustainable paths of development, the crucial requirement is to widen the options available to developing countries for growth.

A world economy which denies itself the benefits of interdependence is both unjust and inefficient. Growth in the developing countries is being hampered by protectionism, by the deteriorating real terms of trade, by the unfavourable conditions for the transfer of technology and by the curtailment of the flow of development assistance.

Programmes of conservation must, therefore, address themselves to inequities in the international economic order. For example, the lion's share of the world's natural resources has been preempted by a few countries. The average citizen of the industrialised countries consumes ten times more fossil fuels and minerals than the average citizen of developing world. The world's resources just cannot sustain such profligate consumption of energy and materials.

Neither can developing countries be denied the right to develop nor are the world's natural resources sufficient for all to follow the greedy path to growth. What then is the answer to the conundrum? The answer lies in more rational patterns of consumption, more efficient utilization of depletable resources by the developed countries, and more equitable access to these resources for the developing.

SAFETY MEASURES

The international community must also address itself to safety measures in high-risk industries. Bhopal, Seveso and Chernobyl have shown how vulnerable we are. It is incumbent on the management of such industries to ensure the utmost vigilance in design, operations and maintenance. Valuable lives cannot be lost due to inefficiency, indifference, negligence or worse.

All other environmental dangers pale in comparison to the ever-accumulating stockpiles of nuclear weapons. We must remove the threat of thermo-nuclear war wiping out, in a wink of history, life as we know it from our common planet. All nuclear weapons must be dismantled.

The report, *Our Common Future*, is both a document of high technical excellence and a call to concerted political action. The report reminds us that "the earth is one, but the world is not". We must recognize that even as development which degrades the environment is self-defeating, so do impediments to development endanger the environment. We must also recognize that environmental issues are closely linked to the larger issues of peaceful coexistence and international cooperation, disarmament and development. Any uni-dimensional perspective on environment would be gravely misplaced. Environment as an international issue, has to be placed in the context of international cooperation, to be pursued through international institutions, to be linked to all aspects of international relations. Conservation is each nation's task, but a task which can be accomplished only in the setting of a cooperative world order.

RESPECT FOR NATURE

In one of his most famous slokas, Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of the Sikh Religion, sang:

Air is the vital force,
Water the progenitor:
The vast earth is mother of all .

The verse sums up the Indian tradition of respect for nature, respect for all that gives us life, respect for the sources of our well-being on earth. In our tradition, there is no arrogance towards nature, no desire to dominate it. Our ancient wisdom teaches us to seek harmony with all creation. All creation is interdependent.

The core of the Brundtland Report is recognition of that interdependence. Everything in our experience, from the centuries-old teaching of our seers to our contemporary experiments in development endorses the essence of the message given to us by Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and her colleagues. We thank them in all sincerity for their deep insights and sage advice.

The report of the commission is the culmination of an important phase of the task. The international community will have to carry forward this work. As experience grows and lacunae in knowledge are filled, answers will slowly be found to the complex questions of development and the environment. The search for the right answers must go on relentlessly. It is a worldwide endeavour to which India pledges unstinting support.

North-East India : Demography, Culture and Identity Crises*

B.P. SINGH

I. INTRODUCTION

THE MANAGEMENT of public affairs in north-east India has been in focus in the regional, national and world press in recent years. Much of the attention has been confined to insurgency, the 'foreign nationals' issue, tribal 'uprisings', 'brutalities' committed by the security forces, 'involvement' of foreign agencies in the area, political 'horse-trading' and floods. There has been no analysis of the economic, cultural and demographic factors which have acquired different nuances in the wake of the rapid modernization taking place in the region since the 1950s and which have a decisive say on the formulation of policies and the efficacy of institutions of governance in north-east India. This paper proposes to offer some facts and reflections on these aspects.

II. SETTING AND ARGUMENT

On January 26, 1950, north-east India consisted of the State of Assam and the Union Territories of Manipur and Tripura. With the passage of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971, the north-east emerged as a significant administrative concept with a North-Eastern Council (NEC) as its regional planning and security organization, replacing in a way perhaps the hitherto more familiar unit in public imagination: Assam. Administratively, the area now consists of seven states of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. The region accounts for eight per cent of the total land surface of India and has a population of over 26 million. The vital statistics are shown in Table 1.

Geography has had its influence on the economic, social and cultural life of the region. The Brahmaputra Valley, for instance, was a colourful corridor between the two great civilizations of India and China, while the Himalayas reach to the frontiers of Iran and Central Asia. But the foremost feature of the social order of north-east India is its heterogeneity. The region is inhabited by three major groups: the hill tribes, the plains tribes and the non-tribal population of the plains. Within each group, there is tremendous variety; in terms of race (probably greater variety than in any other part of the globe); language (as many as 420 languages and dialects);

* Reprinted from *Modern Asian Studies*, Cambridge University Press, London, Volume 21; Part 2; April 1987; pp. 257-82. For fuller appreciation of the problem, see B.P. Singh, *The Problem of Change - A Study of North-East India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1987.

and religion (animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity).

Table 1 POLITICAL UNITS COMPOSING, NORTH-EAST INDIA: VITAL STATISTICS, 1981

State	Area (sq. km)	Popula- tion (million)	Growth rate of popula- tion (per cent)	Density of popula- tion (per sq. km.)	Per cent- age of region	Liter- acy (per cent)
Assam	87,523	19.90	36.09	254	74.48	36.00
Nagaland	16,527	7.73	49.73	47	2.94	41.99
Meghalaya	22,487	1.32	31.25	59	5.36	33.22
Manipur	22,356	1.43	33.65	64	5.39	41.99
Tripura	19,477	2.00	32.37	196	7.64	41.58
Mizoram	21,087	4.87	46.75	23	1.83	59.50
Arunachal Pradesh	83,578	6.28	46.75	7	2.36	20.09
India	32,87,782	683.80	24.75	221	N/A	36.17

SOURCE: Census of India, 1981.

The people of north-east India are composed primarily of five races that entered the area at different periods of history: the Austriacs, the Negroids, the Kiratas, the Dravidians and the Aryans. The Austriacs came from Indochina. They include the Khasis and the Jaintias of Meghalaya and the Morans of Assam. These people prefer women as managers of property and accept the leadership of women in the family. The Negroids, who came from south and south-west China, are the present Nagas of Nagaland. They have shown a tremendous love for freedom and have developed strong village institutions. Men and women are accorded equal rights, but the latter are discouraged from participating in politics, fighting and hunting. The Kiratas, people of Mongolian origin, are known today as the Bodos and their language is Bodo. They are found in Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, North Bengal and Bangladesh and are an important political force in the region. The Dravidians entered north-east India in the recent past and have yet to become a cohesive group in politics. The Aryans, on the other hand, have been coming in, mostly from north Bihar, from the fourth century B.C. They are divided into castes.

Over the centuries, the ethnic cauldron of north-east India has been kept boiling by the contradictory processes of assimilation and preservation of ethnic identity. Today a number of tribes and castes dominate education and administration, among them the Khasis in Meghalaya, the Hindus in Assam, and the Bengalis in Assam, Meghalaya, and Tripura. In 1935, the colonial government saw an advantage in giving political recognition to each tribe by distributing certain administrative and electoral privileges. This was strengthened under the 1950 Constitution of independent India. With the inauguration in 1952 of community development schemes throughout the country, particular ethnic communities began to express their economic aspirations

as well, demanding their own development programmes. Consequent electoral calculations have been based on the recognition of these ethnic nests. Despite the secularization of political affairs, the various religions continue to play an important role in social affairs. Some members of various racial groups have been converted to a new belief, while others have not, and this variety within the group has added to the variety of intra-racial relationships and to political problems. Thus, the traditional bonds of ethnic kinship and religious loyalties that provide security and identity also create a bewildering set of problems for civil servants engaged in administrative and developmental tasks.

Up to the twelfth century, animism and the Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition,¹ based upon India's ancient Hindu epics, dominated most of the region's consciousness. Buddhism was introduced in the seventh century; Islam in the thirteenth; and Christianity in the nineteenth. The legends, myths, folklores and customs of the area were woven with those of the rest of India and originated from the same sources: the Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition. Both the Ramayana and Mahabharata make distinct references to Pragjyotisha and Kamrup—the ancient and medieval names of Assam.² The Kalika Purana and the Vishnu Purana are replete with references of various places in north-east India. We owe the first recorded history to the Chinese traveller and historian, Hiuen Tsang, who visited India in the first half of the seventh century. According to Hiuen Tsang, Bhaskaravarman, the king of Kamrup, popularized the Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition in his kingdom with the help of Brahmins and forged close links with King Harshavardhana of northern India whose seat of power was at Kanauj. The advent of the Ahom rule over upper Assam in 1228 was gradually marked with a greater interaction between the Ahoms and the indigenized Hindu population. The Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition had unprecedented mass appeal in the Brahmaputra Valley and, to a lesser extent, in the neighbouring hills with the neo-Vaishnavite movement of reformation led by Sankardev (1449-1569) in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This reformation movement was part of a similar wave that was sweeping the entire country for the restoration of Hinduism based on Bhakti cult and built around the heroes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata: Rama and Krishna. The Ahom kings believed in Tai and Hindu rituals while the Koch kings, another important ruling clan, were devotees of the Sakta cult, and human sacrifices were common. What Sankardev tried and did succeed in great measure was in his efforts to rid Hindu religion of its magical rituals and beliefs. Satras (monasteries), where prayers were held and religious discourses were given, were established. They became centres of quality among castes and tribes; even the believers of Islam were not discriminated against. Namghars and Kirtanghars were set up in most villages and the satradhikars and senior priests or gosains visited them even from far-flung areas of the Jaintia, Cachar and Arunachal hills. As a result of all these, Krishna became the key figure in social life and came to dominate the religious as well as the entire gamut of thought processes of the people of this region. The crucial factors responsible for the growth of Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition were the persuasive and learned band of Brahmins of northern India who played missionary roles in the propagation of Hindu religion and culture among all sections of society; the absorbing power and influence of Hinduism; the highly secular and receptive character of Austric and Mongolian tribes; the Sruti

tradition under which the stories were transmitted from one generation to the other without the help of written words; and the development of an Aryan dialect which was to be shared by the rulers as well as the ruled (and later became the Assamese language).

Buddhism did not come to north-east India from Bihar, as did Brahminism, but from Tibet into Arunachal Pradesh, and from Burma into Mizoram, from which it spread to other parts of north-east India. Buddhists in India generally follow the tenets of Theravada Buddhism, but the Buddhists of north-east India are mostly Mahayanists, who believe that Buddhahood is open to all.

The impact of Islam began with the unsuccessful efforts of the Turko-Afghan ruler of Bengal, Bukhtiar Khelji, to capture Assam in 1205-6. By 1682, Islam had become the religion of a significant group of people in Assam, Manipur, Tripura and Bangladesh. A process of assimilation began between Hindus and Muslims, and in the Brahmaputra Valley by the seventeenth century Muslims had become an indivisible part of the local population. The British policy of divide and rule, by encouraging divisions particularly between the Hindus and Muslims, had an adverse impact on north-east India. The work of Christian missionaries began in the 1840s with the publication of Arunodaya, a Baptist monthly in Assamese, the translation of the Bible into Assamese, the transcription of tribal languages into Roman script, the establishment of hospitals and the spread of the idea of health care, and the founding of schools and colleges for both boys and girls. The conversion of animists to Christianity occurred on a phenomenal scale. Today, Christians comprise 80 per cent of Meghalaya's tribal population, 85 per cent of Nagaland's, 96 per cent of Mizoram's and 26 per cent of Manipur's. The introduction of Christianity was a new civilizational process and led to growth in literacy and better health care. For the tribals, it meant the stopping of head-hunting. It also led to tribal languages being reduced to writing. At the same time, these developments led to loosening of the intra-tribal bond of unity and decline in the authority of the tribal chiefs. The tribals also opted in favour of Western dress and music.

The economic policies of the British rulers had serious social and cultural repercussions. The modernization of traditional agriculture demanded the raising of crops on all cultivable but fallow land, reclamation of marshy or swampy lands, and introduction of new crops of vegetables, mustard seeds and jute. This required investment in irrigation, flood control measures, etc. But the British did not want to pay for it. They were on the look out for cheap and dependable human labour which was not available locally. This led the British to introduce Bengali Muslim cultivators from East Bengal who were willing to move out of their habitat due to pressures on land in their areas. The discovery of tea in Assam led to a further introduction of tribal labour to Assam in large numbers from Chhotanagpur and Orissa. The British also adopted the policy of releasing land on lease to their compatriots in Assam. By 1928, 1,629,529 acres of waste land were allocated to planters and nearly 1.2 million migrant labourers were working on these plantations. The 1921 census estimated that migrants to tea gardens and their descendants numbered one million and one-third, one-sixth of the total population of Assam. While the increased production of grains and newly found tea attracted the Marwaris—a trading community of Rajasthan—to migrate to Assam, the construction works on railway-

tracks and roads induced Bihari labourers to visit Assam. A large number of Nepalis who came to serve the British Army, did not return to their homeland and settled on forest and river island and took to cattle farming, domestic service, etc. The question naturally arises as to what was the British response to this unprecedented stress on the social and cultural fabric of the Brahmaputra Valley and other regions of the area.

Notwithstanding the notes recorded by certain perceptive British administrators and demographers, the British attitude was largely one of benign neglect towards social and cultural issues. The British did, in fact, apply themselves to the question of opening up of the frontier tribal population and decided to adopt an 'inner line' policy in areas like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram. The policy laid down a line beyond which no person could move without the explicit permission of the distinct authorities and the possession of land in these areas was forbidden to non-residents. The British also kept a minimum of administration and encouraged Christian missionaries to do religious and philanthropic work. The 'inner line' policy discouraged the Brahmins and Gosains from travelling to these areas, who were not even otherwise very enthusiastic, and contained the spread of the Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition and Hinduism. The policy was pursued with such rigidity that even the national independence movement could not penetrate into these regions. Similarly, when the tensions mounted between the indigenous people and the immigrant Muslims over land rights, the British administrative response was one of segregation rather than a solution through socialization or adjustment process. A 'line' was drawn in various territorial units to settle immigrants in segregated areas specified for their exclusive settlement. No thought was given to the long tradition of socialization between the Muslims and Hindus of the Brahmaputra Valley, and division was encouraged.

There is no denying that the internal visions, values and beliefs of those who hold political power, influence the choices that are made in establishing and implementing public policy. When the Brahmins entered Brahmaputra Valley, they brought their own ideas of political administration along with their ideas of the path of salvation. They succeeded in converting a substantial number of the population and their kingdoms were set up and administered in accordance with the Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition. The Ahoms, who invaded Assam in the beginning of the thirteenth century, brought a new set of values and beliefs. Like their kinsmen of Burma and their ancestors of South China, the Ahoms believed in the religious and cultural values of Tai,³ influenced by Buddhism. However, in the long six hundred years of their rule in Assam, they made no attempt to impose their religion but concentrated instead on shaping the administrative system according to the experience of their ancestors. This led to oligarchical rule and a system of compulsory service instead of taxation. The annexation of north-east India by the British in 1826 heralded a new and somewhat contradictory set of values in both politics and administration. The management of public affairs gradually took on the character of a representative government based on the primacy of law. On the other hand, the British, actuated by a strong desire to rule by any means, brought about a deepening of the sense of communal tradition and stifled the growth of a tradition of democratic social organization. When we come to look at the freedom struggle, we find that the Indian National

Congress was more concerned with reforms of the social order than with advancing or disavowing any particular religious or ethnic group. The emphasis of both Gandhi and Nehru was, rather, on how to accord equal respect to all religions and to all groups of people. Gandhi wrote that India's prayer should not be 'God, give him the light that thou hast given me' but, rather 'Give him all the light and truth he needs for his highest development'. This readiness to concede to a fellow citizen the right to follow his own light became the foundation of both secularism and national unity. Under Nehru's leadership, the principal values came to be conceptualized as an ethos of national unity amidst regional diversity. Democracy, secularism, egalitarianism, modernization and the promotion of policies of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence in international affairs were the components of this ethos. Students of political science in India refer to it as the Gandhi-Nehru framework of values.

In northeast India, as in other parts of the country, the political system was long dominated by the Indian National Congress party, which acted as arbiter among conflicting claims of the various ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups since the 1920s. Although the breakup of the party was averted in 1969, its second split in 1978 led to an ascendancy of ethnic and religious loyalties in the electoral process and to the complete overthrow of the electoral covenant that had been in force under the umbrella of the Congress party. The resurrected Congress party of the 1980s controls the government in five of the seven political units of north-east India; Tripura has a Marxist government and Assam is run by a regional Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) from December 1985. The electoral process, which should have been the chief instrument of conflict resolution, has not been accepted by certain ethnic groups. A section of the Nagas has declared its independence of the Indian Union. In a similar vein, the Mizos asserted a separate nationality for themselves in 1966. A decade later, in 1976, the Meiteis of Manipur revolted against the Constitution of India because, in their eyes, the political process neglected their genuine aspirations. Various other ethnic groups, while accepting the broad framework of the political system, have asserted a greater role for themselves in political and economic administration. The Assamese of the Brahmaputra Valley agitated for the protection of their cultural, political and economic pre-eminence and for the removal of 'foreigners' from Assam during 1979-85. The point is that primordial loyalties of clan, tribe and religion demanded and still receive far greater loyalty than the idea of the State. Loyalty to the social order, which was a fundamental aspect of civilization, did not allow loyalty towards the political notion of the State to grow particularly in areas unaffected or partially affected by movement for national independence. Given the history of suspicion among ethnic groups, the massive inflow of people from outside the region, and the scarcity of jobs, membership in an ethnic group continues to provide a fundamental base of comfort and identity in north-east India. Rapid industrialization may ultimately be an answer, but the fear of being swamped by members of other communities sustains a culture of isolation and appeals to ethnic pride continue to be an important factor in the political equation. All these have a bearing on polity management. A closer look at forces relating to demographic changes, cultural aspirations and fears of identity is called for--in order to understand the problems of north-east India.

III. IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

During the last one century and a half (1826-1981), the population of north-east India has witnessed unprecedented geometrical progression from less than 2 million to a sizable 26 million people. The population of present-day Assam rose from 3,290,000 persons in 1901 to 19,902,820 persons in 1981 showing a rate of 505.01 per cent in population growth as compared to only 186.84 per cent growth in the population of India during the corresponding period. The corresponding figures in millions for other units for 1901-81 period respectively are: Arunachal Pradesh 0.02 and 0.63, Mizoram 0.08 and 0.49, Nagaland 0.12 and 0.77, Tripura 0.17 and 2.05, Manipur 0.28 and 1.14 and Meghalaya 0.12 and 1.32. The total growth rate from 1901 to 1981 has been Arunachal Pradesh—not available, Mizoram 491.71 per cent, Nagaland 661.48 per cent, Tripura 1,088.63 per cent, Manipur 404 per cent and Meghalaya 289/95 per cent. The impact of this phenomenon on the society, polity and economy of the region has been very significant.

The migrant communities started concentrating their hold over land and other sources of livelihood. From an ethno-economic angle, there was fairly neat division in respect of economic spoils among the migrant communities. The migrant tribal labourers from Chhotanagpur and Orissa settled on tea estates with their families and later occupied waste land of cultivation to supplement their meagre income from tea garden employment. The other major migrant community, Bengali Muslims from East Bengal, settled initially on fallow land along the Brahmaputra but gradually extended their hold over lands in traditional tribal areas and Assamese villages. The Bengali Hindus cornered middle class jobs in Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya and also started small businesses and settled in several towns.

The impact of migration on politics has been equally significant. In a democratic framework of one-man-one-vote, the demographic factor played a crucial role and brought in spectacular changes in holders of political power. The most striking development has been in Tripura. Over the years, due to migration of the Bengali Hindu population from East Bengal the tribal autochthones were outnumbered. The tribal population dropped from 64 per cent in 1974 to 29 per cent in 1971. The Bengali population became 68 per cent of the total population in 1971. From all available accounts, the Bengali percentage is now 70. The result has been that political and administrative power passed from the hands of indigenous tribals to immigrant Bengalis. The transfer of land from the tribal population to Bengali migrants proved to be the most critical factor in deteriorating social relations and a flash-point was reached in June 1980 at Mandia leading to a carnage, initiated by the tribals with Bengalis taking retaliatory measures, in which several hundreds lost their lives and three hundred thousand were rendered homeless. There is widespread apprehension in the minds of the Assamese caste Hindus that in the near future they will lose political power in favour of numerous migrants. The other states of the region also share the Assamese fears.

The question naturally arises why were the migrant communities not assimilated in the traditional society of north-east India? Why did the various political units comprising north-east India fail to evolve participatory and conflict-resolving social orders and polity? There are several factors responsible for this phenomenon: First, the

socialization process in the region has been at a very low level compared to states with more hospitable terrains and movement facilities. Second, during 1228-1826 there was a limited and somewhat organized migration to Assam and other regions of north-east India which was well managed by respective societies. As the Assamese historian, S.K. Bhuyan, records:

The Ahom rulers encouraged men from India to come and settle in Assam provided their introduction was of advantage to the country. Artisans, craftsmen, weavers, clerks, accountants, scholars and saints, both Hindu and Muslim, were freely admitted, and occasionally brought by special arrangement with the rulers of Hindustan as there was an inadequacy of such men in Assam. But these licensed foreigners, after having come to Assam, had to cut off all connection with their mother country, and to become assimilated with the Assamese in language, manners and racial sympathy. They become subjects of the Assam government like older inhabitants. The Assamese objected to the admission of foreigners who owed allegiance to other rulers and proposed to reside in Assam as a temporary measure. The Assamese made a sharp distinction between desirable foreigners who come to stay and become naturalised, and undesirable foreigners upon whom the Assam government could not exercise any degree of control. Europeans fell in the second category, and hence their entrance was almost always forbidden, and their movements closely watched even when they were permitted to enter the Assam territory.⁴

Third, in Assam, the commencement of the civil war in the late eighteenth century and the subsequent Burmese war had disrupted social harmony and the Brahmaputra Valley society in particular was in no position to absorb the fresh migrants during the nineteenth century. Fourth, the cultural renaissance that deeply influenced the consciousness of the common people in Bengal under the leadership of Raja Rammohan Roy and Keshabchandra Sen, Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda have had only a marginal influence on the people of north-east India. There is no denying that people like Dinanath Bezbaruah (1818-95), Gunabhiram Barua (1835-96), Kamalakanta Bhattacharya (1853-1936) and several others did make heroic efforts to propagate the renaissance ideals in the Brahmaputra Valley but no outstanding leadership emerged in this behalf. The region was, thus, deprived of a mass-movement of unity among different sections of the people so refreshingly felt in Bengal. Fifth, the Indian National Congress which united the people of the entire country under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi for attainment of national independence could not bring the large segments of tribal population into its fold largely perhaps due to the British policy of restricted movement in the hill area. Sixth, the process of political integration initiated by the British did help in the growth of institutionalized procedures but this solitary measure could not usher in an integrated political community in the region. The reorganization of Assam from time to time was an expression of the failure to develop an integrated community and continued dominance of ethnic bonds and primordial loyalties. Seventh, the kind of political system and elite structure evolved up to 1947 was not conducive to the evolution of participatory and conflict-resolving social orders. The most enduring political system of the Ahoms had developed interaction and close

cooperation with the various chiefs in the hills only in certain limited periods. The hills had small polities which were frequently engaged in inter-tribal conflicts. Finally, although the exploitation of the natural resources did lead to the establishment of oil-producing centres and a massive tea-plantation economy, there was no synthesis between the traditional agricultural economy of the rural peasants, artisans and traders with the industrial economy inasmuch as the tea produced in Assam was sent either to Calcutta or directly to London for sale. Even after independence, a dual economy ethos is continuing in which the wages of the migrant labour is remitted to their homes outside the region and this group of labour constitutes a majority on various construction projects. The contractors and traders, too, transfer their profits to their home states or other advanced urban centres for investment. Similarly, and in tune with this ethos, the major companies have consistently kept their headquarters at economic or industrial policy formulation centres outside the region leading to the adoption of schemes and projects which are viable for profits regardless of their suitability for the growth of economy or maintenance of ecology.

Against this backdrop of socialization among ethnic groups, the ruling elites view development having a bearing on their control over levers of political power with a great degree of criticality. The break-up of and various divisions among the national political parties have given greater importance to ethnic loyalties in electoral behaviour in north-east India. Besides, there is a fairly long tradition of use of the state machinery by the ruling elites to further the interests of their ethnic brethren in securing dominant positions in the economy and educational system of the State. The case of Assam is the most classic. During the first century of British rule, the Bengali Hindus furthered the interests of their kinsmen from within and outside the region in securing jobs and small businesses to the exclusion of tribals and Assamese-caste-Hindus. During the 1930s and 1940s of the present century, the Muslim leader Saadulla, during his stewardship of Assam administration, encouraged his co-religionists to expand and consolidate their hold over agricultural land. After independence, the Assamese-caste-Hindus widely used the instrumentality of the State apparatus to allow their compatriots to have their control over various segments of Assamese society: administration, education, culture and economy.

Such partisan use of administration impairs social harmony and ensures the rise of opposite groups and ethnic communities clamouring for political and administrative power. This leads to alignments among various ethnic and religious groups. When political contrivances fail or when these do not take place, social harmony often gets seriously impaired. In such eventualities, an interventionist role to the Central Government cannot be denied. The real solution of such a deep crisis, however, would be in the maintenance of order and the simultaneous commencement of dialogues and debate for the resolution of conflicting claims of respective cultures and political attitudes, education of the masses and encouragement of the socialization process. It may also be essential to allay the genuine fears of an ethnic community by providing such safeguards as would be widely acceptable and then to implement these through the instrumentality of the local administration and active support from the national leadership. Such situations have been recurring themes of politics in Assam and Tripura in recent years and are likely to

assume critical proportions in Meghalaya in coming decades.

Notwithstanding a massive agitation over the 'foreign nationals' issue in Assam during 1979-85, it has to be appreciated that there can be no population policy for Assam alone, for the simple reason that in the very nature of geography it will not work; the migrant population can come to Tripura and North Bengal and then move into Assam. Any demographic policy in order to be pragmatic has to take into account: (a) the powerful Assamese sensitivities towards the presence of Bengali Hindus as well as Muslims and the total opposition of their elite towards any future influx into Assam; (b) the presence of certain elements in Assam's border districts of Goalpara and Cachar who would welcome migrant population from Bangladesh; (c) the existence of a humanitarian approach among the people as well as in the state administrative apparatus of West Bengal and Tripura towards migration of Bengali Hindu refugees; (d) the responsibility of the Central Government to honour international agreements and national commitments; and (e) the views of various political units of north-east India as well as the states of West Bengal, Bihar and Sikkim on the 'alien' question. Besides, the acute poverty and the traditional distrust between Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh cannot be wished away. Whatever the provocation for a large-scale influx of refugees into India, it should be the endeavour of our diplomacy to ensure that these people are helped within the Bangladesh border, the responsibility being that of the international community, the Government of India contributing generously for such relief operations.

It would, thus, be clear that a population policy for north-east India would not be only a physical barriers or sealing of the international borders between India and Bangladesh. It has to be a product of meaningful consensus between different political units in eastern India and must adequately reflect the concerns of the local people. Such a policy alone could be successfully implemented by the governments of the states and at the Centre. The administration would be greatly facilitated in its implementation tasks if identity cards are expeditiously issued to the Indian nationals domiciled in these states which would help distinguish them from their neighbours from Bangladesh and Nepal. The identity cards would be of great assistance for the preparation of electoral rolls, registration in employment exchanges and admission into educational institutions. Similarly, the registration of births and deaths and compulsory registration of all land transfers would help administration attain its objectives to keep the region free from 'foreign nationals'.

IV. CULTURE AND RELATED ISSUES

The cultural landscape of north-east India is characterized by several ethnic groups whose social responses, with varying degrees of difference, emanate from ethnic value-systems and the promotion thereof. The forces of democracy, politics and modernization have decisively altered the age-old patterns of relationship and spatial consciousness of every tribe or ethnic group. However, in the foreseeable future, the tribal factor, the relationship between the Assamese Hindus and the Bengali Hindus and the Assamese Hindus and the Bengali Muslims will dominate culture and politics of north-east India.

The Tribal Anguish

The tribals constitute a majority population in Meghalaya (80.58 per cent), Nagaland (83.99 per cent), Mizoram (93.82 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh (69.82 per cent) and have a significant presence in Tripura (28.44 per cent), Manipur (27.3 per cent) and Assam (11 per cent). The individuality of a tribe is characterized by its cultural traits, its language, its code of laws, its geography and its socio-economic institutions. All these make one tribe different from another, and even more from an ethnic group of people in the plains. Nonetheless in the course of evolution, the tribes in north-east India have developed certain traits and attitudes which are common to each other. These relate to: (a) sense of kinship; (b) adherence to traditional beliefs; (c) love for the language; and (d) deep attachment to the land.

In tribal society, the sense of kinship is closely linked to the family and blood relationship. A tribe is usually composed of a number of clans, kinship groups and extended families. All members have a sense of belonging to a community which had common ancestors. This unit has found its cementing force in the tribal 'animistic' faith which is full of spirits related to fire, water, forest, mountain, etc. The tribal dialects which, in several instances, like that of the Bodos and Khasis, have developed into sophisticated modern languages and have provided cohesion to the tribal way of life.

The proverbial attachment of a tribal to his land is a complex web of relationships, the primary force of which is economics. But it is also related to tradition, family ties, religion and so on.

The tribals in the hills as well as in the plains of north-east India have been disturbed in a great variety of ways from their land since 1947—notwithstanding the government policies and programmes to the contrary. The process commenced in and around Shillong, the headquarters of greater Assam administration and now capital of the State of Meghalaya, where land was released liberally after 1947. The same story was more or less repeated in Nagaland after 1963. The regrouping of villages in Mizoram after the insurgency in 1966 and in Nagaland earlier, found the villagers at communication points under the care of security forces but in the process they completely lost their ancestral villages, paddy fields and traditional places of worship. The land alienation of the tribals in Tripura was largely caused by machinations of vested interests as a result of which the tribals sold their ancestral land to migrant Bengalis and went away deeper into remote areas of the hills. Assam is a classic case where the tribals have lost their land and the future of social cohesiveness and maintenance of peace would greatly depend upon the way the land problem of the tribals is tackled in coming years. The Assam scenario needs a more detailed analysis in view of its largeness and possible impact on other states of the region.

There are separate provisions in Assam for administration of land in the hill districts, i.e., North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong; and in the plains districts. In the hill districts, the land is owned communally and no individual has a transferable right in land. Under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, the authority in respect of land administration is vested in the autonomous district councils who run the administration in accordance with old customs and usages. As regards the plains, the tribal belts and block—37 in number—were constituted immediately after independence under executive orders under the direction of a perceptive indigenous

leadership.

Despite the importance of land in the economy of the tribal society and way of life, no empirical studies were made in Assam until the last decade. The three studies made in 1970s, thus, merit attention: (1) a study made by the Tribal Research Institute of Assam in 1974 captioned 'The problems of Transfer and Alienation of Tribal Land in Assam' (unpublished); (2) Report of the Sub-Committee of Advisory Council for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes (Plains) on Settlement of Land in Tribal Belts and Blocks and of Forest Land, 1976 (published); and (3) Report of the Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Relating to Land and Revenue, 1979 presented to Assam Legislative Assembly on 5 April, 1979.

These studies have revealed that in the two hill districts of Assam the formal transfer of land to the non-tribals is very nominal but actual transfer is large. In Karbi Anglong District, the 1974 report has found that 'temporary alienation of lands from the hands of the tribals to the non-tribals in the shape of Paikas, Sukti Bandhak, Khoi Bandhak, Mena, etc., is increasing at a very alarming rate'. It goes on to warn that 'within the next few years this temporary alienation of land might lead to complete distortion of the tribal economy if it is not nipped in the bud'. The 1979 report submitted to the Assam Legislative Assembly also highlighted 'some very clever devices' of depriving the tribals of their lands.

The administrative failure to protect the sanctity of tribal belts and blocks could be attributed to callousness on the part of the officials and acquiescence to the violations of land on the part of society. Due to 'inner-line' restrictions and communal nature of ownership of land, the problem of land alienation in Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh and hill districts of Assam has not assumed the same alarming proportions as in Manipur, Tripura and Assam where individual ownership is prevalent and there is no general restriction on land ownership rights or movement of population. Efforts should be made to find out the various socio-economic factors responsible for the land alienation process, such as the habit of the plains tribals not to pay land revenue like their hill brethren, tribal frivolities and temptations for liquor and the state of their indebtedness. We must know at least in some specific cases how the district councils composed exclusively of the tribals succumbed to the machinations of the vested interests and became a party to the alienation of tribal land to outsiders.

Along with politicization, there was a very sudden exposure of particularly the tribals in remote hill areas to a complex modern civilization. The tribes of head hunters were exposed to writing and argument, the scantily-clad tribes were initiated to the comforts of tropical and woollen garments, the nomadic tribes who had not even handled a bullock cart were given training to drive jeeps and trucks, the practitioners of slash-and-burn methods in cultivation were imparted virtues of permanent cultivation, high yielding crops and irrigation. And all these have been achieved in one or two generations. A certain degree of conflict and violence was, thus, inevitable in this process of change. The high rate of literacy among them and their willingness to participate fully in endeavours of a modern civilized society may pose a threat to the collective ownership of land philosophy as evidenced in Shillong, Dimapur, Kohima and Haflong and also to the traditional social order, but the tribals are going to play an increasingly important role in society, politics and

the administration of north-east India and the country at large. There is no political threat to tribal languages in the hills and the Bodo language is gradually getting modernized with publications in subjects like science and medicine in recent years. The need is to handle their cultural and political aspirations and land rights both in the hills and the plains with adroitness and sympathy.

The Assamese Fears

The Assamese view themselves as a nationality with the Brahmaputra Valley as their homeland, Assamese as their language and Hinduism as their religion. They had forged alliances with the Bengali Muslims on the understanding that the latter would adopt the Assamese language, educate their children in Assamese schools, and play a subservient role to the caste-Hindus in the agrarian sector. Similarly, the tea-garden labourers, who are either Hindus or Christians were treated as neo-Assamese on the understanding that they would accept the Assamese language and support the caste-Hindus in politics. In the forging of this kind of relationship, the Indian National Congress played a crucial institutional role. The plains tribals--the autochthones--have been accorded a higher status in the Assamese nationality conception and the Bodo language is accorded a respectable place in the medium of education up to the secondary schools despite a declaration of Assamese as the official language of the State in 1960.

In the growth of Assamese nationalism, the Assamese language was always perceived as the chief instrument of self-assertion and accorded a mother status. Today, it looks difficult for anyone to swim in the Assamese cultural mainstream unless he is fluent in the Assamese language. In fact, Assamese politics during the last sixteen decades has always been concerned with Assamese language and culture. The Assamese psyche seems to have been guided by a philosophy that language and power have a close relationship. If power goes the language also declines, as happened after sovereignty passed over to the British from the Ahoms and the Assamese language was replaced by Bengali.

Much could be traced to history. The fear of Bengali supremacy has been consistently haunting the Assamese mind since Assam's annexation by the British in 1826 which resulted in the replacement of Assamese 'dangariyas' in government jobs by Bengali 'bhadraloks' and relegated the Assamese language to a dialect status up to 1873. During 1826-73, contradictory facts prevailed. The Assamese speakers were numerically number one but Bengali was the official language of administration as well as higher education. The British justifiably altered the policy in favour of Assamese as the language of administration and education in 1873. But on 12 September, 1874, with the incorporation of Sylhet into the chief commissionership of Assam, Bengali-speaking people became more numerous in Assam than the Assamese speakers. There is no evidence to suggest that the British deliberately created this paradox in 1874 after they made Assamese the official language in 1873. But the fact remains that the Assamese shared this historic experience of being numerically second to Bengali speakers until, according to the 1931 census, the migrant population, mainly the Bengali Muslims, embraced the Assamese language. The transfer of Sylhet, a Bengali-speaking district, to Pakistan in 1947 was viewed by several political analysts in the Brahmaputra Valley as a step which would lend a degree of homogeneity

in otherwise one of the most diverse linguistic and cultural regions in the Indian subcontinent as it allowed the Assamese-speaking population of the State to dominate electoral politics. Over the years, however, and largely due to the massive influx of the Bengali-speaking population from erstwhile East Pakistan and now Bangladesh into Assam, the anxieties of the Assamese have been revived. The 'untruthful' responses of the Bengali Muslims as regards their mother-tongue before successive census enumerators have added enormously to the Assamese fear psychosis as regards their identity, language and culture.

The matter of greater significance to our analysis, however, is that the Bengali Hindus, whether in Assam or in Tripura, are not at all actuated by any desire nor perceive any compulsion to learn either Assamese, or Tripuri or any local dialect or language. They view with pride that the Bengali language is well developed and superior to every local language of north-east India. Despite the fact that several Bengalis have contributed to the Assamese language, the attitude of an average Bengali-speaking person towards Assamese, the most developed of the local languages of north-east India, is far from complimentary or respectful. While many educated Bengalis living in north-east India view the Assamese language with a modicum of respect, the majority of Bengali Hindus consider the Assamese language inferior and dependent upon the Bengali language, literature and media for creativity and excellence. Over the years, the Bengali Hindus have set up their schools in Assam, and in Shillong and they are no longer required to send their children to local vernacular schools. The result is obvious: the young children do not have school friends from the people of the other linguistic stock unless they have been educated in English-medium schools which are the exclusive preserves of the elite and the rich. Similarly, in every office there is a sizable Bengali presence which enables the Bengali speakers to lead a fairly segregated way of office life. A large number of the Bengali Hindu population in Tripura, Cachar and Brahmaputra Valley draw strength from the presence of a large number of people of their stock in North Bengal land in Calcutta. All these have given the Bengali Hindus a distinct and enduring cultural personality.

The linguistic profile of Cachar adds another dimension to the language issue in Assam. Cachar district, both linguistically and culturally, has a Bengali personality. Nearly 90 per cent of Cachar's 2.5 million people speak Bengali, the language of the district courts of administration is Bengali as is the medium of instruction in most of the educational institutions. The separation of the Bengali-speaking district of Cachar is tempting many as a solution to safeguard Assam's identity, language and culture. The idea may be attractive to politicians and academicians who would be willing to buy peace for 10 or 20 years by this separation. But further political reorganization of Assam is not an answer to its social, cultural and economic problems. A separate Cachar would leave the common people where they are and many internal conflicts—both of religious and ethnic varieties—within the present Cachar district would gradually assume unmanageable proportions hampering, in turn, the process of any meaningful economic development. The Bengalis in the Brahmaputra Valley would organize themselves in a small group with separate identity and look up to the Bengali language as the sole means of preservation of that identity.

There is no denying that language is a uniquely powerful instrument in unifying a diverse population. However, some of the very features of a language movement that impart the power of unity under certain circumstances become the root cause of disintegration and conflict in a different situational matrix. This has been true of the Assamese language movement as well. In earlier times, the Assamese language helped in the process of spreading the Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition, Hinduization of the Ahoms, integration of several bordering tribes, unity among different people for the cause of national independence and so on. In recent years, however, the Assamese language movement gave impetus to the forces which helped cause bifurcation of Assam, violent conflicts between linguistic groups, etc. The process started with the declaration of Assamese as the official language of the State in 1960 and its introduction in phases from community development blocks onwards. The framers of the new language policy failed to realize that the process of making a composite Assamese nationality a durable component of Indian nationhood could not have been rushed by formalizing the state's position on the Assamese language hardly a decade-and-a-half after independence. Perhaps patience and deft handling are called for in dealing with the language question which is an emotive issue.

The Muslim Factor

There are several dimensions to the question of cultural identity of Muslims in north-east India. However, two groups among the adherents of Islam are easily identifiable. The first group of Muslims came during the thirteenth century and are popularly known as Assamese Muslims in the Brahmaputra Valley. The second group of Muslims came from East Bengal during British rule and thereafter and this group is referred to as Bengali Muslims. The Muslims are not found in the hills of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

The Assamese Muslims came from North India as members of the Muslim expeditionary forces into Assam from time to time and belonged to the Afghan and the Mughal stock. Over the years, a bond of unity between the Assamese Hindus and these migrant Muslims developed. During the neo-Vaishnavite movement of reformation led by Sankardev (1440-1569) and Madhavdev (1489-1597), the Muslims were assimilated in the local culture. Today, the Assamese Muslims are proud of the Assamese language and culture. The cultural impact is so overwhelming in societal relations that the Assamese Muslims are closer to the Assamese Hindus than to their co-religionist Bengali Muslims. Like the Assamese Hindus, the Assamese Muslims are monogamous and the practice of unilateral divorce is unknown among them; the practice followed among the Bengali Muslims on these counts is just the opposite. The net result is that in cultural terms both the Assamese Hindus and the Assamese Muslims consider themselves 'superior' to the Bengali Muslims and the Assamese Muslims refer to the Bengali Muslims as 'Miyans' in the same contemptuous vein as the Assamese Hindus who call them 'Mymensinghians'.

While religion has not played an obstructionist role in the maintenance of continued unity between the Assamese Hindus and the Assamese Muslims, the relationship between Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims, though speakers of the same language, has been marred by communal disharmony. In the realm of culture, the Bengali Muslims of East Bengal always viewed the Bengali renaissance of the Ram Mohan

Roy-Rabindranath Tagore period as an extension of Brahminic culture and heritage through the Bengali language. As effort was made by the Bengali Muslims to orient themselves to Islamic culture and heritage and in the process Sanskrit words were substituted by Arabic and Persian terms in the Bengali language. The effort of West Pakistan rulers to substitute Urdu for Bengali after 1947 was resented by the people of East Bengal who saw in this move deprivation of their mother tongue: Bengali, as well as their way of life. The liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 created another crisis of identity among the Bengali Muslims inasmuch as adoption of secularism as a State philosophy came to be viewed as negation of Islam. In the quest for separate identity, the Bengali Muslim elite had earlier perceived their Islamic identity as a part of Pakistan as a subordinate status for them vis-a-vis the Muslims of West Pakistan.

The subsequent philosophy of secularism made them feel a part of Bengali culture of West Bengal and India. Accordingly, efforts are under way in Bangladesh to construct a Bengali Muslim cultural heritage independent of Bengali Hindu culture and Pakistani Muslim culture. All these and several other dimensions of cultural incompatibility are present in the cultural make-up of Bengali Muslims in the Brahmaputra Valley. The question whether the Bengali Muslims as an aftermath of agitation over the 'foreign nationals' issue in Assam during 1979-85 would go close to Bengali Hindus who are also affected by the agitation like the Bengali Muslims and declare themselves as Bengali-speakers before the census officials cannot be conclusively answered at this stage. Another temptation that the Bengali Muslims in Assam might have is to follow Bangladesh's Islamic cultural policy in the same way as Bengali Hindus of Assam do in respect of the Bengali culture of West Bengal.

These are the alternatives available before the Bengali Muslim elite of the Brahmaputra Valley who are better educated and modernized than ever before, but the balance of the community's convenience would demand a closer linkage with the Assamese way of life and language on considerations of economic factors and (limited) socialization between the two communities during the last ten decades. The Assamese will also opt for Bengali Muslims whom they have handled successfully to their advantage in the past and with a fresh political understanding would again feel confident to do so in future.

V. IDENTITY CRISIS

An identity crisis is inherent in a society which is undergoing rapid modernization as north-east India, where certain tribes have graduated from head-hunting as a sport to that of cricket in a short span of one or two generations. However tempting it might be, no State system can order or reorder in a chronological fashion the processes of cultural, economic and political changes or, in the alternative, keep the social system in a static form. It is one of the lessons of history that whenever the state has tried to reorganize the community in its own bureaucratic image—like regrouping villages in Mizoram and Nagaland after independence, or prescribing a language of its choice over the population of a state as was done during the first phase of British rule or later in 1960s in Assam—there have been more problems and the objective of orderly progress has given way to disorder and violence. Similarly, the efforts of

certain groups of people to go back to the past practices in dress, food and reading habits in the name of caste, tribe and culture as has been witnessed in certain areas of Assam, Manipur and Tripura in recent years are bound to fail. For the people of the region have already tasted the fruits of science and technology and would not remain long concerned merely with historical nostalgia or in rumination for antique values. Besides, in order to remain an Assamese, a Bengali, a Tripuri, a Meitei, a Garo, a Khasi, an Ao, it is to be appreciated that revivalism is no answer.

What is essential is to realize that the widespread identity crisis syndrome has been caused by the large-scale migration of population from outside the region during the last one hundred years and a total dependence of the people on the land and state apparatus for their livelihood. This phenomenon has made the local population feel outnumbered and swamped by people of different cultural origins. The inability of various sections of the migrant population to adapt themselves to local language, customs and traditions has further accentuated the 'identity crisis'. The socialization process which alone could have helped generate understanding among different communities gets itself frequently impaired in the wake of periodic intercommunity clashes and killings and the tendency of each person to confine himself to his caste, community, language and religious group increases. The administrative system is always pre-occupied with a fire-brigade kind of operation either containing human tragedies and/or giving relief and succour to people who have fallen victims of natural calamities, to the neglect of its role as an instrument of development and, thus, becoming a meaningful agent of socialization and progress.

As it appears, religion will not be playing a major role in the 'identity crisis' syndrome. Religious revivals and declines may be a recurring theme in the region but it will not be a major force in deciding policies of development or national integration. Of the seven political units, Christianity is the religion of the majority population in Nagaland (66.9 per cent) and Mizoram (86.1 per cent) and near majority in Meghalaya (46.9 per cent). Hinduism is professed by a majority of people in Assam (72.5 per cent), Manipur (59 per cent) and Tripura (89.6 per cent). The majority of people in Arunachal Pradesh are believers in animistic faith (63.5 per cent). Among the 26 million people of north-east India, Hinduism is professed by over 66 per cent, Islam by nearly 20 per cent and Christianity over nine per cent. Despite the sizable presence of Christians in three political units, their total numerical strength does not exceed 3.5 million, while adherents of Islam who are mostly concentrated in Assam followed by Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya barely exceed five million.

In the years to come, the 'identity crisis' of the Assamese people will dominate the cultural conflict scenario of north-east India. The cultural identity of the indigenous people of Assam could be retained and further strengthened only with assimilation of the neo-Assamese groups of people like the tea-garden labourers, the immigrant Muslims and those who permanently migrated from north India into the Assamese way of life. The leadership will have to come from the Assamese middle class and the elite as well as organization like Assam Sahitya Sabha, Bodo Sahitya Sabha and several other cultural organizations representing smaller ethnic group composing the Assamese cultural stream. The task will be greatly facilitated once

the leadership of these institutions gets manned by people who are no chauvinists but are men and women of vision and dedication.

It needs to be clarified that the 'identity crisis' in north-east India does not come from the urge to national integration as the national integration philosophy firmly adheres to the maintenance of a plural character and the development of the tribal people in terms of their own genius. The main sustaining force behind the 'identity crisis' syndrome emanates from the complex operation of economic forces in the region. The indigenous people have come to believe that their failure to meet the basic needs of life has been caused not by their inactivity, sloth or lack of entrepreneurship, but by 'outsiders' who have 'robbed' them of their economic opportunities both in the agrarian sector as well as in government offices.

There are two special features of development experience. First, there is a widely shared view, particularly in Assam, that no important development project was ever initiated in the region without clamour from the local people. This phenomenon is not peculiar to this region but in every state of India in the 1960s and 1970s people agitated in favour of the establishment of prestigious industrial or communication projects in their area and some of these requests were met with by the Central Government. What is significant is that in Assam it has created a psychological impact to the extent that a strong feeling exists that the Central Administration is not sympathetic to popular demands. Neither the state government nor the Central Government have taken any meaningful measure to remove this widespread misunderstanding. Secondly, the words 'development', 'industrialization', and 'urbanization' are considered in several quarters in the region as instruments to favour the outside population of the region. This impression has persisted ever since the tea plantation industry led to an influx of outsiders into Assam. The steps taken towards industrialization under successive Five Year plans having caused the influx of skilled and unskilled manpower from outside the region have further strengthened this feeling. This phenomenon is acting as a countervailing force in the way of efforts of modernizers and the government machinery to break the culture of poverty in the region.

In this situational matrix, a new look at the strategy of development itself with a view to reaching out the benefits of planned development to the common people of the region is called for. An effective answer could be to move in the direction of employment guarantee to the rural people while continuing vigorously with the policy of infrastructure development. The full employment scheme would mean provision of productive work to every able-bodied person in the age-group of 18-60 years on a fixed remuneration. The scheme should be formulated through gaon panchayats. The planners, the village-level leaders and the bureaucracy acting in unison would carefully assess the quantum of jobs and overall work that could be created in an area comprising a panchayat. An effort should be made to match the work with the skills and expectations of each able-bodied person. The manpower rendered surplus by each panchayat would be carried forward to the block, the sub-division and district level. Side by side with public works, the potentialities for self-employment would be assessed at panchayat level and resources needed to promote self-help would be provided to willing persons. The areas of meaningful economic activity would relate to the harnessing of energy, control of floods, reclamation of land and

soil conservation, dairy development and animal husbandry, works on irrigation, creation of potential and work in the field of horticulture, plantations and forestry and promotion of agriculture, hand-looms and handicrafts.

VI. CONCLUSION

At the national level, regional and ethnic loyalties, caste and language conflicts, religious fundamentalism, politics of violence and pervasive corruption have triggered off forces of regression. On the other hand, a large number of people, particularly the educated, are seeking change and a rapid pace of economic development. Besides an individual's search for meaningful livelihood, there is also a dormant desire for deep and comprehensive change in the social order. The specific nature of change no doubt would be determined by the needs of the time and interaction between various social, economic and political forces operating in the country; but the problem of orderly change faces the country.

In north-east India, several optimistic developments have taken place recently despite ethnic conflicts and violence. On 15 August, 1985, Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, announced from the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi, to a large gathering of Indians and foreigners who had assembled to celebrate India's independence obtained in 1947 on this day, that in the early hours of the morning of that 'sacred' day, the Government of India signed an agreement with the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) as a solution to the problem of foreigners in Assam. This brought instant peace in the Brahmaputra Valley. The group of students who were agitating from 1979 was overnight converted into a political party styled as Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), and then equally dramatically voted to political power in the December 1985 elections. The overwhelming majority of the AGP legislators are below 35 years and most of them are bachelors. Profulla Mahanta, a 32-year-old bachelor and still a student, became the leader of the new party and the Chief Minister of Assam. A similar peace agreement has been concluded in Mizoram. A number of erstwhile insurgent leaders have chosen to contest elections and some of them, notably Biseswar of Manipur, are in legislative assemblies. The Indian people have exhibited tremendous interest in happenings in north-east India as never before and have shown a genuine willingness to accord favoured treatment to the people of this region who have undergone hardships on grounds of centuries of economic neglect, migration of population from different parts of the Indian sub-continent and administrative underdevelopment. Above all, the operation of the national planning system, banking system, political system and recent developments in communications, introduction of television and increasing media coverage of events of the region have generated a process of substituting an isolation syndrome with one of familiarity and understanding between the people inhabiting the region and the country at large. There is no tangible threat to the national integration ethos in the region despite the operation of certain disgruntled elements within the region and outside the country. But in the context of a history of limited socialization and ethnic conflicts, and rapid modernization after 1947 the unruly class-room scenario is likely to continue in the region for years to come.

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3. The Ahoms belonged to the Tai race of south-west China and came to Assam from Burma.
4. S.K. Bhuyan, *Anglo-Assamese Relations 1771-1826*, (Gauhati, 1949), p. 57.
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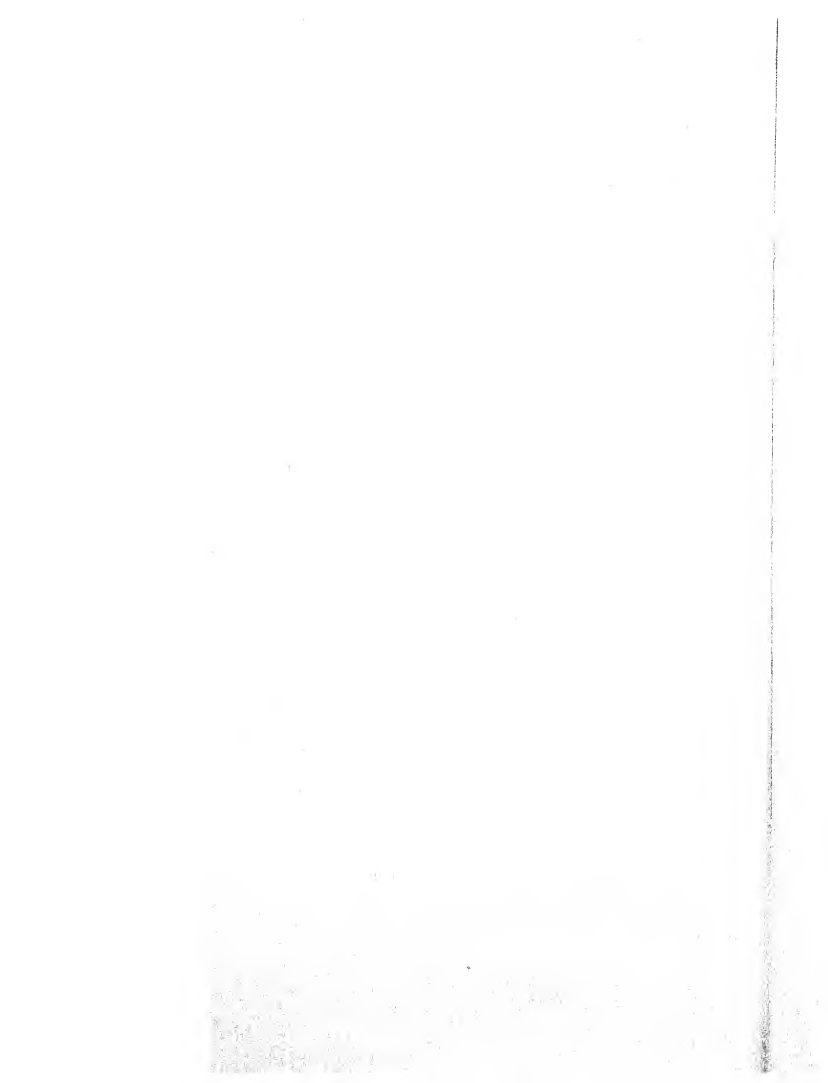
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